



Help Your Loved One Get Good Information

- ✓ **Try to go to all doctor visits with your loved one.** Bring a list of questions and concerns. Take good notes.
 - **Ask:** “What are some alternatives to surgery?”
 - **For every diagnosis, ask:** “What else could it be?”
- ✓ **Urge your loved one to get an *independent* 2nd opinion** — maybe even a 3rd opinion. (*Not from the doctor’s friends or co-workers.*)
 - **Dig for more information on the Internet** at reliable sites, sponsored by the government or leading health care associations.
 - **Note:** Internet information and other research — or advice from friends — does not take the place of seeing doctors!
- ✓ Urge your loved one to **talk to surgeons who have done “thousands” of the planned surgery, not “hundreds.”** (*May mean traveling to a different city if affordable.*)
- ✓ If surgery is not an emergency, urge your loved one to **schedule it on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. If possible, avoid July, August, and major holiday weeks.**
 - Schedule surgery for when the surgeon will be working and available to your loved one for several days afterward. (*It’s OK to ask, “Planning a vacation?”*)
- ✓ Help make sure **your loved one** brings the surgery checklists to doctor visits. Go over them together. (*If the surgeon objects to these safety checklists, consider finding another.*)
- ✓ If the surgeon works at different hospitals, help your loved one **find out which one has the best record for infection.**
- ✓ Urge your loved one to **talk to the surgeon about a screening MRSA test** — a quick swab inside the nose. *It’s a helpful test so the hospital will know to take some special steps if your loved one happens to carry this germ.*
- ✓ **Ask the surgeon to explain risks for surgery if your loved one smokes or drinks heavily.** (*Maybe advice for stopping or cutting back too?*)
- ✓ Ask for the doctor’s advice about **diet and exercise to prep for surgery.**