



UT Southwestern
Medical Center

Max Program

Maximizing your success before and after surgery

Pre- & Post-Operative
Rehabilitation
Program

Welcome to the Max Program

The Max Program is designed to help you achieve the best possible outcome before and after your operation. We are dedicated to maximizing your preparedness for surgery by adjusting modifiable behaviors like smoking and inactivity, as well as optimizing your wellness to ensure you get the most out of your surgical experience.

Studies have shown patients who improve their health and fitness before they undergo surgery have a more successful procedure and an enhanced recovery. This may shorten your hospital stay, lower your chances of any surgical complications and speed up your recovery time.

The Max Program focuses on three ways you can improve your health:

- Physical activity: increase mobility and stamina
- Nutrition: give your body the building blocks to heal and recover
- Mindfulness: Focus on relaxation and decreasing your anxiety and stress

Your physician and the Max team will design a customized approach which identifies your unique needs and designs a plan to facilitate your rapid recovery following surgery. The Max team will be in close communication with your care coordinators at Clements University Hospital to ensure that your anticipated post-operative needs are addressed, and to seamlessly transition your care back into the clinic following discharge from the hospital.

Improving your surgical outcomes is as simple as changing a few daily routines. You have the power to make a difference in your post-operative recovery.

Physical Activity

A carefully planned exercise routine can help improve your chances for success. Exercise improves blood flow of oxygen-rich nutrients to working muscles and keeps them healthy. A walking program is an easy way to build up your endurance and overall health before surgery. It also helps keep you active after surgery, which is very important for your recovery.

Benefits of a walking program

- Improved circulation
- Lightened mood
- Weight loss
- Strengthens muscles
- Improves sleep
- Supports your joints
- Improves your breathing

Things to keep in mind

- Start your program at least six weeks prior to the surgery, if possible.
- Start slowly. Don't push yourself too far when you are starting out. You can progress to increased frequency and duration.
- Set a goal to increase your steps by a certain amount each day. Try increasing your steps by 50-150 each day.
- Our Max team will help you in establishing a goal and in tracking your progress.

Steps to getting started

1. Begin with a warm up by stretching and walking at a slow pace, moving into a faster pace as you continue. Allow time for a cool down by slowing down and stretching your muscles again.
2. Attempt to work up to a total of 30 minutes per day. This can be divided into shorter sessions throughout the day.
3. Try to walk a little longer each time.
4. If you become short of breath or fatigued, slow down or break up your sessions. You should be able to hold a conversation; if not, you may be overexerting yourself.

Walking tips

- Wear comfortable clothing and appropriate shoes
- Always warm up
- Use good walking posture
- Carry water
- Use sunscreen when walking outside
- Change up your routine
- Be cautious in the Texas heat – as an alternative, try walking in local public air conditioned spaces



Nutrition & Diet

Anytime you undergo surgery, your body is being put under added stress. Recovering from surgery requires an extra amount of nutrients for our bodies. Being well nourished before your surgery means you are better equipped to handle surgery, which your body will have all the needed building blocks for healing.

There are steps you can take before and after surgery to alleviate some of the stress and to help support recovery.

Be conscious of the foods you eat

There are several food groups that you can incorporate into your diet in order to best prepare your body before and after surgery. Foods you shouldn't eat are different for each surgery. You should consult with your doctor regarding any specific restrictions.

Before surgery

- Antioxidants may enhance the immune system. Most fruits and vegetables are rich in antioxidants. Some examples are tomatoes, spinach, carrots, berries, red grapes, cranberries, apples, peanuts, and broccoli.
- Protein has an important role in healing so making sure you eat protein before surgery can help speed up your recovery. Examples include cottage cheese, yogurt, fish, chicken, turkey or eggs.



After surgery

- Fiber helps prevent constipation following surgery. Examples include whole grain breads, oatmeal, fruits, vegetables and cereal.
- Carbohydrates are a main source of energy and prevent muscle from being broken down. Some examples of healthy carbohydrates include sweet potatoes, white potatoes, chickpeas, rice, oats, and yogurt.
- Protein is vital to recovery. It will make you heal faster and maintain muscle mass during your recovery.
- Vitamins and minerals provide essential nutrients. Supplemental Vitamin C, A, D, zinc and calcium may be valuable following surgery.



Hydrate properly

Drinking water is crucial to being healthy. The body relies on water when it is recovering so staying hydrated is an important component of healing. Water prevents dehydration and helps metabolize vitamins and other nutrients. In addition, drinking plenty of water is great for your overall health. 60 or more ounces of a water a day is a good goal to aim for, unless otherwise counseled by your physician.

Mindfulness

Managing the stress of preparing for and undergoing surgery can be challenging. There are some easy things you can incorporate into your routine to reduce the amount stress and to help you relax. Decreased stress and anxiety will help you feel better physically and emotionally.

Relaxation tips

- **Meditation-** The goal of meditation is to focus and quiet your mind, eventually reaching a higher level of awareness and inner calm. Choose a peaceful environment, comfortable position, point of focus and close your eyes. This will block out any external stimulation and prevent you from being distracted.
- **Yoga-** This involves a series of both moving and stationary poses, combined with deep breathing. As well as reducing anxiety and stress, yoga can also improve flexibility, strength, balance, and stamina.
- **Breathing-** Take some time to follow your breathing. The key is to breathe deeply from the abdomen, getting as much fresh air as possible into your lungs. The more oxygen you get, the less tense, short of breath and anxious you feel.



- **Listening to Music-** Music can help you relax and provide a distraction. It has also been shown to help reduce the sensation and distress of pain.
- **Sleep-** Make sure you are getting 6-8 hours of sleep each night. Sleep is essential to healing.
- **Support Group-** It is important to have a group of people who are educated on your situation and are able to help you during your recovery process. These people will provide mental and physical support throughout your journey.

