



# Prehabilitation

## What is that?

**Prehabilitation** is the process of ensuring your body is strong and healthy before surgery. Your surgeon wants you to spend your time before surgery working on the following areas: Physical activity, Nutrition, Relaxation and Stress Relief. It has been shown that poor physical performance capacity and poor nutrition increases the risk of complications during and after surgery and can prolong recovery. Taking an active role in preparing for surgery is an excellent way to feel more in control of your body during a time when you may be feeling anxious. Below are guidelines to follow.

### **Physical Activity:**

Many patients who are scheduled for surgery lead a sedentary lifestyle. Your surgeon may discuss ways to increase aerobic capacity and muscle and core strength. You will be provided instructions for moderately intense exercise to be performed 3-4 times a week before surgery. Preoperative physical exercise has been shown to reduce postoperative complications and reduce the length of the hospital stay for abdominal surgery patients.

### **Nutrition:**

The primary goal of nutrition therapy before surgery is to build up nutrient stores before surgery and provide your body with the extra nutrients it will need to heal and restore energy following surgery. Your surgeon may provide guidance on how to prevent losing lean body mass during this time. The following nutritional supplements may be suggested.

- 1.) Whey protein - consume one ounce daily
- 2.) Vitamin C - 1000mg daily
- 3.) Fish oil - 1000mg daily
- 4.) Multivitamin - 1 daily

These nutritional supplements can be purchased at most grocery or drug stores over the counter.

### **Reducing Stress and Anxiety:**

The effects of anxiety can be wide ranging and impact the recovery process. We offer several programs to patients and their caregivers that are intended to relieve stress, increase physical health and mental clarity. Ask any staff member at the Cancer Institute or look to the monthly cancer newsletter for a listing of upcoming classes offered; such as yoga, tai chi, art therapy, meditation, and gentle Zumba. Classes are held at the beautiful Hospitality House at McLaren and the cost for attending is free. Just show up and try something new!

In addition to trying one or more of the classes offered, there are many ways to reduce anxiety. Do healthy things that you enjoy and make you feel relaxed like taking a walk, playing with your pet, listening to music, reading a book for pleasure, or visiting with a favorite friend or family member.

Exercise, proper nutrition and stress relief are good for anyone, not just someone preparing for surgery. Finding someone to partner with and support your Prehabilitation may improve your success and be more enjoyable.