

God's Prescription for Surgery

Q. I am scheduled for major surgery. Do you have any recommendations on how I can make my stay in the hospital comfortable?

T.F., Somerville, New Jersey

A. I strongly recommend planning your hospital stay in such a way that you are able to create, to the extent it's possible, an atmosphere that allows the Spirit of God to move freely to bring about your health and recovery.

Make your room comfortable with peaceful and inspirational pictures, or bring Scripture paintings with you, or have Scriptures written out so you can place the Word before your eyes. If possible, get a room with a nice view of the outdoors.

Ask each of your doctors what their plan of care is so that you will feel informed and have greater peace of mind about your treatment. Write out your questions beforehand, since you may forget them if they are not written down.

I recommend taking a tape player into the operating room and playing healing Scriptures or the Bible on tape. Or, if you prefer, ask if a tape of worship or praise music could be played during your surgery.

If you are fortunate enough to have a Christian physician, surgeon or anesthesiologist, ask him or her to pray for you

during your surgery and to speak only positive messages, not repeating the fears or other negative comments of anyone on the surgical team. Ask the elders of your church to anoint you with oil before and after surgery, according to James 5:14-15.

After surgery it is important to have love and encouragement from family and friends, but don't let them speak criticism, fear and anxiety over you. Make sure your friends are not like the ones around Jairus' daughter, who were full of doubt and unbelief and not faith (see Luke 8:49-56). Encourage visits by friends and family who can lift your spirits.

Also, it is especially important to laugh. Watch funny movies, get a clean joke-book and tell jokes, and laugh your way back to health. Laughter actually triggers the release of endorphins in the body, which are morphine-like chemicals that relieve pain, and it helps relieve stress, eliminate negativity and improve the immune system.

It is important to walk as much as possible after surgery to speed up the healing process. I also recommend that my patients get an "egg crate" covering for the mattress because hospital beds tend to be firm and uncomfortable. And make sure your clothes are comfortable as well as modest.

Q. Are there other risk factors besides smoking, high blood pressure and high cholesterol that are associated with coronary artery disease?

K.H., Eagle Pass, Texas

A. In previous columns I mentioned elevated levels of homocysteine and lipoprotein "a" as risk factors for coronary artery disease. There also is a correlation between coronary

artery disease and certain infectious agents.

The most common of these agents is Chlamydia pneumonia. A simple test by your physician to determine your “ultrasensitive C-reactive protein level” can reveal if you have an inflammatory process occurring in the plaque of your coronary or carotid arteries.

This test is very effective if you do not have rheumatoid arthritis, ulcerative colitis, lupus, Crohn’s disease, or any acute infection such as sinusitis or bronchitis.

If you have a history of risk factors for heart disease, then you may want to obtain a blood test for Chlamydia pneumonia, as well as an ultrasensitive C-reactive protein blood test. (You also may request the tests if you do not have the risk factors.) If the results of both are high, then there is a strong possibility inflammation is occurring in your carotid or coronary arteries.

A two-week course of Biaxin or Zithromax is then recommended. Antibiotics kill good bacteria, so take “friendly” bacteria as well.

Other infectious agents associated with coronary artery disease include Helicobacter pylori—the bacteria that causes more than 50 percent of stomach ulcers—bacteria from dental infections and even viral infections.

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