

Preparing for Your Surgery

- Set a firm date for your surgery with Dr. Bowers
- Arrange for your Letters of Recommendation, which should be forwarded directly to Dr. Bowers prior to your surgery: one from a Psychiatrist or Ph D in Psychology.
You need two letters. Due to hospital and insurance requirements, this is not negotiable.
- Continue facial hair removal and hormone therapy
- Stay in shape! Your recovery will be faster if you are healthy and not overweight. The 210 pound restriction is generally not waived unless a person is very fit / athletic / tall.
- If you smoke, QUIT
- Consider taking a multivitamin and optimizing vitamin C (citrus) intake for ideal tissue healing
- At least 3 laser sessions, or five electrolysis sessions are recommended prior to surgery although these should NOT be within 2 weeks of surgery. DO NOT go above the shaft or out to the thighs...hair is wonderful cover-up for scarring which, however minimal, will be present.

The Month Before Your Surgery

- Reduce your estrogen dosage (to 2 mg Estradiol or 0.625mg Premarin) **two weeks** prior to surgery. At the same time, stop Progesterone, Anti-androgens, Enteric Aspirin, Ibuprofen, herbal supplements, blood thinners, etc). If you are taking **any** additional medications call Robin for instructions.
- Consult with your endocrinologist/physician to inform her/him about your surgery, your reduction in medications, your post-surgical hormone regimen (this will be strongly influenced by Dr. Bowers before your departure), and also to make an appointment for a post-surgical checkup.
- If you are over 45, provide us with a copy of an EKG performed within 6 months of your scheduled surgery. If you do not provide a copy, an EKG must be performed at MSRHR (for a billed fee of \$45 from Dr. Jimenez)
- Artificial nails can interfere with monitoring equipment in the hospital, as can nail polish. Please take off artificial nails and nail polish on your index fingers.
- Send your surgical fees to Dr. Bowers (cashiers check) for arrival no less than two weeks prior to your surgery. (Fed Ex, Priority Mail or some other method that you can track and insure.) Call if you have not received notice of final check amount.
- Review the information packet you have received by Robin for the date and time of your pre-surgery visit.

Travel Arrangements

- Plan to arrive two days before your surgery. Two days before is safest in case of travel delays and to give you some time to relax and to enjoy Trinidad! You will need to be in Dr. Bowers' office the day prior to surgery.
- You will not check in to Mt. San Rafael Hospital (MSRH) until the morning of your surgery

- You can expect to be discharged on the 4th day following your date of surgery. You will spend two nights in after your release at The Morning After Guest House. This is included in your surgical fees. Our office can help coordinate your transfer to the house, pharmacy, etc.
- Consider staying two extra days in Trinidad in case of complications, and to give yourself some recovery time before you travel home. Total time in Trinidad should be 10-14 days.
- Arrange for a hotel for yourself (before and after your hospital and Guest House stay) as well as for anyone accompanying you for your surgery. If you would like to spend additional nights in the Guest House, this can be arranged for an additional fee. Contact Robin for more details. Hotel Information can be found on the website here: <http://www.marcibowers.com/grs/surgery2.html>
- Arrange for flights (advance tickets may be less expensive!)
- Consider how you will get from the airport to Trinidad. Check the website for travel information: <http://www.marcibowers.com/grs/surgery2.html>
- Dr. Bowers' office can provide transportation to and from the Colorado Springs airport (~\$150 each way) - we require advance notice, pending availability. You may drive yourself back to the airport, although taking advantage of a friend or relative is a reasonable idea.
- Travel time via car from Denver: 3.5 hrs, Albuquerque 4 hrs, Colorado Springs 2 hrs

When You Arrive in Trinidad

- Confirm your previously scheduled, pre-surgery appointment, and let us know you are in town, by calling (719) 846-6300 (office)
- If you need transportation to and from the office, and/or the hospital, please call us in advance at (719) 846-6300 to arrange.
- You will receive a prescription for bowel prep, and must go to the pharmacy to get it filled (this generally costs around \$20).
- Do not make big plans for the day before surgery – you'll want to stick close to a bathroom once you drink the bowel prep.
- Clear liquids ONLY on the day prior to surgery. Do not have breakfast or any solid foods throughout the day. You can view a list of acceptable clear liquids here: <http://www.marcibowers.com/grs/surgery3b.html>. Nothing to eat or drink after midnight, please!
- Please shave your genital area the night prior to surgery. (Someone might do this for you the morning before surgery). You might want to bring along a higher end razor instead of using the hospital standard single blade type.
- Remember to discuss your medications with Dr. Bowers so that she can work with you to phase these in after your surgery
- If you get into town early, you can find some information and brochures about Trinidad here: <http://www.marcibowers.com/grs/tourism.html>

Things to Bring to Trinidad: Medical

- Mt. San Rafael Hospital provides a set of high quality, graduated stents with a slight curve for dilation. There should be no reason to buy your own unless you really want something special.
- Lubricant for Dilation:
KY Jelly is the classic but it can get expensive. **Surgilube** is similar, but lower cost, and used by most patients.
- Thin Maxi Pads (will need 4-6 per day once you check out of the hospital)
- An inflatable or foam donut for the trip home – the hospital-supplied one sometimes leaks after a while, and having an extra for the car, work, etc is not a bad idea. Some patients find that a horseshoe-shaped neck pillow (available in airports or at other stores) is ideal; it can be adjusted to fit your shape, and can be used for its intended purpose after surgery!
- Bed pads to protect sheets (if you plan to stay overnight in a hotel post-operatively). You can get disposable ones.
- A small hand mirror (will help with dilation until you get used to where things are)
- Your hormones and other medications (you will continue taking these after your surgery), per your endocrinologist's and Dr. Bowers' recommendations. At the hospital you will need to give all the meds to the nurse. They will be secured in the hospital pharmacy. (You will be able to use your own meds, but the hospital cannot leave them at the bedside.)
- A support bra (if you are having a breast augmentation) - you will get one at the hospital, but it will get soiled. Some of our patients have recommended the Yesmina Front Zippered Medical Bra. You can find it on the website www.makemeheal.com

Things to Bring: Boredom Suppressants

- Stamps and Stationery if you want to write some letters
- CD Player, DVD Player, Laptop, etc. as well as media. Bring headphones so you do not bother other patients. MSRH now has high speed wireless internet.
- A good book or two. Keep it light, you may not be able to focus or concentrate as well as you are used to while on pain medication
- Magazines (probably better suited to your limited attention span and the frequent interruptions of hospital life)
- Bring your address book or PDA so you can contact your friends and family.
- Bring spare batteries or chargers for electronic devices
- Consider buying a phone card or making sure you have a calling card for making long distance phone calls from the hospital
- A camera (we're all so photogenic!)

Things to Bring to Trinidad: Personal

- Clothes (you will not need much for the hospital, but plan loose and comfortable outfits for after your release)
- Make-up and Toiletries

Bring A Little Cash

While your surgery fees are generally inclusive of most medical expenses, plan to bring some money to Trinidad for the following:

- Snacks, the gift-shop, comfort food, in room television, etc.
- Downtown Trinidad has some really cute and unique places to shop for a memento of your visit or gifts for friends and loved ones who put up with your pre-surgical freaking out.
- Plan on spending about \$100 - \$120 for prescriptions upon your release. (Metrogel, antibiotics, and pain meds). You can pick these up at the local Hometown Pharmacy, Safeway, or Walmart. Bring along any insurance cards, although you may need to pay for the meds and submit the bills for payment.
- If you are over 45 and have not provided us with an EKG, you will need to have an EKG performed at MSRH - Dr. Jimenez will bill the reading fee for this separately (about \$45)
- If you are having your HIV test done in Trinidad, the fee is around \$75, payable to Planned Parenthood, in Dr. Bowers' office.
- Plan enough money for meals and hotels on any days you are staying before or after your surgery.

Things to Have Pre-purchased for When You Return Home

- Lubricant for Dilation - you will need LOTS of this – consider getting a few boxes from a surgical supply shop ahead of time. Buying this in single tube quantities at your local drugstore will be expensive
- Neosporin, Triple antibiotic, or A&D Ointment. You'll get what's left of your tube from MSRH that you can bring home with you. You may need 1-2 more which you will apply to suture areas while you are healing.
- Thin Maxi pads to protect your underwear and clothes
- Panty liners to protect your underwear once you no longer need the maxi pads
- Anti-bacterial soap to clean stents and hands before dilating *any soap will do...*
- Soft toilet paper
- Flushable moist towels to clean yourself before dilating as well as after going to the bathroom, which may be messy for a while (spraying) until things heal up. Baby wipes also work well. (Nothing that is alcohol based.)
- If you live alone, stock up on foods that are nutritious, will keep while you are in Trinidad, and are easy to prepare. You may not want to brave the supermarket for a while

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