






# THE TOP 5 Things Surgeons Can Do to Improve the Surgical Experience for Patients

These recommendations were developed based on the findings from the patient experience workshops undertaken by the Best Practice in Surgery, Department of Surgery at University of Toronto, led by Dr. Erin Kennedy. The patient advisory committee (PAC) consists of 46 patients and surgeons from all surgical specialties and all 8 University of Toronto affiliated hospitals. The recommendations below are suggestions from the PAC on different ways that surgeons could enhance the surgical experience of their patients.

RECOMMENDATION		RATIONALE
<p>1 Offer a second follow-up appointment after the initial consultation</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patients felt overwhelmed during the initial consultation and found it difficult to think of questions at that time</li> <li>• Patients want the option of having a follow-up appoint prior to surgery to re-review the surgical plan and answer any questions that the patient and their family came up with after having time to process the initial information</li> </ul>
<p>2 Offer a patient buddy</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patients want someone to talk to, to help them better understand the surgical process, procedures and potential outcomes after surgery from someone who has already experienced it</li> <li>• Ideally, surgeons will offer to connect their current patient with a past patient from their practice who has had a similar operation</li> </ul>
<p>3 Show your patient that he/she is your priority on the day of his/her surgery by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeing the patient with his/her family immediately pre-op</li> <li>• Avoiding cell phone use in front of the patient before he/she goes to sleep</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patients often feel anxious and unsettled prior to surgery and suggested the following strategies to help minimize these feelings</li> <li>• Patients want to see their staff surgeon on the day of their surgery, before anesthesia</li> <li>• Patients do not want healthcare professionals to be on their cell phones in the operative room</li> </ul>
<p>4 Make sure it is clear to your patient that he/she should call you if they have any concerns following surgery</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patients are often unsure who to contact if a problem or concern arises once they are home</li> <li>• Surgeons should inform their patients to contact them (not the ER or a family physician) for postoperative concerns and provide them with the most direct way to reach them</li> </ul>
<p>5 Provide a follow-up phone call from a staff surgeon following discharge after surgery</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patients often feel worried about and unsure of what's 'normal' once they are discharged from hospital</li> <li>• Patients would like a phone call from their staff surgeon within two weeks of discharge to allow them to ask questions directly related to their case and receive reassurance for their symptoms</li> </ul>