



An Ambulatory Surgery Center (ASC) is a facility that offers surgical procedures for patients who are discharged within 24 hours. Patients receive elective surgical care in a highly specialized and controlled environment that provides patients with a less rigid and more cost-effective setting than that of a hospital. Patient satisfaction is increased by a closer relationship with a single nurse throughout the entire process, which helps patients manage their perioperative period and recovery, maximizing the benefits of surgery. Simple things such as ordering a meal are more individualized.

Traditionally, an inpatient hospital stay was required for all joint replacement procedures. Three primary factors made hospitalization necessary: pain control, physical therapy, and the possible need for blood transfusion. Advances in surgical technique, implants, comprehensive blood management, and multimodal pain management have markedly reduced the hospital stay and have virtually eliminated the need for extensive formal rehabilitation.

We experience pain as tissue injury during surgery leads to inflammation that triggers nerve stimulation through peripheral nerves to the spinal cord and on to the brain. Many opportunities exist to minimize pain throughout this process, but we have historically relied on narcotics alone to manage pain. More progressive techniques reduce the tissue injury at the outset thereby decreasing inflammation, which reduces nerve stimulation. Reducing tissue injury also reduces physical limitations, making rehabilitation easier and immediately possible. Additionally, adjustments to anesthesia and other medications reduce pain more effectively while also minimizing side effects like nausea that delay recovery. This comprehensive approach enables patients to experience only mild discomfort as they return home with a new joint the same day of surgery.

Patients undergoing outpatient surgery at an ASC receive consistent information regarding the procedure, more involvement from family members, and clearer instructions on how to navigate postoperative pain. This environment allows the surgical team to provide more personal attention to patient care and education, which in turn permits patient and family to have a more functional understanding of all aspects of surgery, ongoing care, and postoperative expectations.

Allowing more individual control over personal postoperative recovery increases patient satisfaction. Benefits of ensuring patient understanding include the patient's ability to comply with the proposed health care plan, control of pain management, active management of health care decisions, and ensures a follow-up plan that decreases the risk of complications and improves recovery and function.

The ASC setting offers increased flexibility based on the individual patient's needs. Outpatient hip resurfacing, total knee replacement, partial knee replacement, total hip replacement, total shoulder replacement and many spine procedures can be performed safely with a high level of satisfaction and remarkable cost savings to the patient.