

GENERAL SURGERY

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Surgery in Your 20s, 40s and 60s: What Really Changes As You Age?

Welcome to the February newsletter, as a general surgeon, I am committed to empowering patients with knowledge to navigate their healthcare journeys confidently. This month, we look at surgery across ages.

Surgery is never a one-size-fits-all experience and age plays a bigger role than many people realise. Whether you are considering surgery in your 20s, navigating health decisions in your 40s or preparing for a procedure later in life, your body responds differently at each stage. Understanding how recovery, pain, healing and lifestyle adjustments change with age can help you prepare better, recover faster and make informed choices.

Surgery in Your 20s

In your 20s, the body is generally more resilient. Recovery tends to be faster, wounds heal more efficiently and pain is often easier to manage. Many patients in this age group bounce back quickly and return to work or daily activities sooner. While surgical risks are usually lower, proper rest, nutrition and following post-operative instructions are still critical to avoid complications or delayed healing.

General Surgery News

I pick a topic each month and discuss it in detail on my social media accounts.



Dr. Tendani Muthambi
Specialist General Surgeon



Surgery in Your 40s

By your 40s, surgery often intersects with busier lives, hormonal shifts and the early presence of chronic conditions such as high blood pressure or diabetes. Healing may take longer than it did in your 20s and pain or fatigue can linger a bit more. Surgical risks may increase slightly depending on your overall health, but good pre-operative preparation makes a significant difference. This is the decade where planning recovery time and adjusting expectations becomes just as important as the procedure itself.

Surgery in Your 60s

In your 60s and beyond, surgery requires a more holistic approach. Healing is slower, pain sensitivity can be higher and the body may not compensate as easily as before. The presence of other medical conditions or medications can affect surgical outcomes, making thorough assessments essential. Age alone is not a barrier to a successful surgery. With careful monitoring, strong support systems and realistic recovery timelines, many patients in their 60s recover well.

Post-Op Lifestyle Changes Across Ages

Post-operative lifestyle changes vary across ages, younger patients may focus on returning to fitness or work quickly, while patients in their 40s and 60s often need to rethink long-term habits like diet, movement and stress management. Rehabilitation, pelvic floor care and gradual activity resumption become increasingly important with age.

Final thoughts



No matter your age, the key to a successful surgical experience is preparation, communication and patience. Understanding how your body changes over time empowers you to ask better questions, set realistic expectations and participate actively in your recovery. Surgery isn't just about the operation, it's about supporting your body before, during and long after the procedure.