



### Complementary & Alternative Therapies 4-1

#### Herbals and Supplements

Most anesthesiologists will ask patients to discontinue taking herbal supplements 2 to 3 weeks before surgery as many interact with anesthetic agents or interfere with blood clotting and could cause a problem. If doing without a supplement is not possible, the container should be brought to the anesthesiologist.

Black cohosh, St. John's wort, feverfew, goldenseal, valerian, ginger, and ginkgo biloba all can have adverse effects either on clotting mechanisms or by interactions with other medications and anesthetics. It is best to stop all herbals before surgery.

and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, and anticoagulants have a continuing effect on blood clotting for several days, and are usually discontinued 3 to 7 days before surgery (Complementary and Alternative Therapies 4-1).

Nutritional status and body weight are significant factors in healing and repair of the surgical site. Obesity presents problems related to such routine procedures as venipuncture and intubation for general anesthesia, and causes prolonged uptake of anesthetic drugs.

The operating room personnel are notified if the patient is hard of hearing, is essentially blind when glasses are not in place, or has a **prosthesis** (artificial body part).

The news that surgery is needed usually comes as an emotional shock to patients and their families. The changes it brings about in the routine of their lives will naturally place some personal and financial burdens on them (Cultural Cues 4-1). For some patients the



### Nutritional Therapies 5-1

#### Foods High in Vitamin C and Protein

*When counseling surgical patients about their diet, encourage the following food choices:*

##### FOODS HIGH IN VITAMIN C

Citrus fruits and juices	Turnip or collard greens
Strawberries	Broccoli
Cantaloupe	Mangos
Tomatoes	Peaches
Bell peppers	Pineapple
Cabbage	Potatoes

##### FOODS HIGH IN PROTEIN

Meats: chicken, beef, pork, lamb*	Beans
Cottage cheese	Eggs
Milk*	Ice cream
Cheese	Grain products: breads, pasta
Peanut butter	Tofu; soy products

\*Meats and milk products contain the highest amounts of protein.



### Health Promotion Points 12-1

#### Sore Throat

Teach people to seek medical assessment when hoarseness or a sore throat lasts longer than 2 weeks, as this will assist in the early detection of throat malignancy.



### Cultural Cues 4-2

#### Beliefs Regarding Surgery

Cultural beliefs and values regarding surgery must be taken into consideration. If the patient does not speak the same language as the surgical team, an interpreter should be enlisted to assist with communication. If a female patient's culture has strict rules for female attire, she needs assurance of sufficient privacy and protection of modesty to allay any fears she might have. Such issues and interventions must be conveyed to the surgical team. If there are certain cultural taboos regarding an aspect of the surgery, the surgical team needs to know them and plan a way to achieve a good outcome without violating such a taboo. It is especially important to know whether the patient will accept a blood transfusion.

Some people are concerned about whether they will "wake up" or survive the anesthesia and surgical procedure. Some patients have the strong spiritual belief that they need to cope with sickness, suffering, and death. Others may need help in finding the spiritual support they need. Still others do not want to discuss this particular facet of their lives. Allow time with clergy or a spiritual advisor before the procedure per the patient's desire.

#### Laboratory and Diagnostic Test Data

Box 4-2 lists the most frequently required tests before surgery. A chest radiograph is usually obtained, and an electrocardiogram is ordered for many patients over 40 years of age. If the patient has lung disease, pulmonary function tests may be ordered. If the laboratory reports indicate any abnormal values, surgery may be postponed. Most surgeons prefer to wait on surgery if a patient's hemoglobin level is below 10 g/dL.



**Think Critically About . . .** Why would anemia make a patient a poor surgical risk?

**Surgery puts a strain on the cardiovascular, renal, and respiratory systems.** Liver function is important because the liver is involved in synthesizing clotting factors, producing albumin, and metabolizing and