

# A guide to your Major Head and Neck Surgery - Part 1



This booklet will help you understand and prepare for your surgery.  
Bring this booklet with you on the day of your surgery.

[www.muhcpatienteducation.ca](http://www.muhcpatienteducation.ca)

Centre universitaire  
de santé McGill



McGill University  
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Office d'éducation des patients  
Patient Education Office

PRET SURE

Parcours de rétablissement chirurgical du CUSM  
MUHC Surgery Recovery Program

This booklet was developed by the MUHC Surgical Recovery (SURE) working group.

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## IMPORTANT

Information provided by this booklet is for educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice or instruction of a professional healthcare practitioner, or to substitute medical care. Contact a qualified healthcare practitioner if you have any questions concerning your care.



This material is also available through the MUHC Patient Education Office website  
[www.muhcpatienteducation.ca](http://www.muhcpatienteducation.ca)

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# Table of Contents

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## Introduction

What is a care pathway? .....	1
What is the head and neck anatomy? .....	2
What is a major head and neck surgery? .....	3
Total laryngectomy .....	3
Flap free reconstruction .....	4
Tracheostomy .....	6
Neck dissection .....	7
Who are the members of your head and neck team? .....	8
Follow-up .....	10

## Resources

Glen site parking information .....	11
Notes .....	12
Map of Royal Victoria Hospital - Glen site .....	<b>Back</b>

## What is a care pathway?

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When you go to the hospital for your major head and neck surgery, you will be part of a **Care Pathway** program. The Care Pathway program helps you get better quickly and safely. Your health care team worked together to create this pathway.

### This booklet (Part 1) will:

- Help you understand and prepare for your surgery

### The next booklet (Part 2) will:

- Explain what you can do to get better, faster
- Give you goals for every day that you are in the hospital
- Give you information for when you return home

Research shows that you will recover faster if you do the things that are part of the Care Pathway explained in this booklet. There are instructions about eating and drinking, physical activity, and controlling your pain. These things will help you feel better faster and go home sooner.

**Bring this booklet with you on the day of your surgery. Use it as a guide during your hospital stay.** Hospital staff will review it as you recover and before you go home.

Having surgery can be stressful for patients and their families. The good news is that you are not alone. We will support you each step of the way.

Please ask us if you have questions about your care.

### Your MUHC surgery team

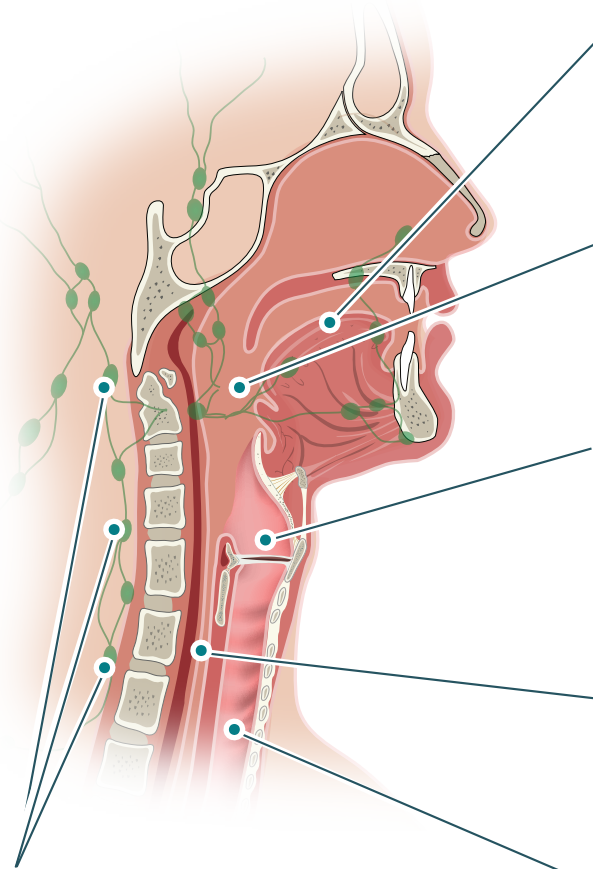


If you are not comfortable with English or French, try to have someone with you during your clinic visits and hospital stay who can help you understand.

# What is the head and neck anatomy?

## Neck

The neck connects your head and your chest. There are important body parts in the neck. These include the tongue, pharynx, larynx, esophagus, trachea and lymph nodes.



### **Tongue**

The tongue is an organ made of muscle. You use it to talk, taste food, chew and swallow.

### **Pharynx**

The pharynx is also called the throat. It is what you use to swallow food and liquids.

### **Larynx**

The larynx is called your voice box. It allows you to make sounds when you speak. It also stops food from getting into your lungs.

### **Esophagus**

The esophagus is a tube that allows food to get into your stomach.

### **Trachea**

The trachea is your windpipe. It lets air into your lungs.

### **Lymph nodes**

Lymph nodes work like small filters. They help remove things like viruses and cancer cells from your body. They look like little beans. There are hundreds of lymph nodes in your body. They work together to form the lymphatic system.

## What is a major head and neck surgery?

This booklet explains different types of major head and neck surgery. Your surgery could include one or more of these procedures.

Your surgeon will tell you which of these you will have.

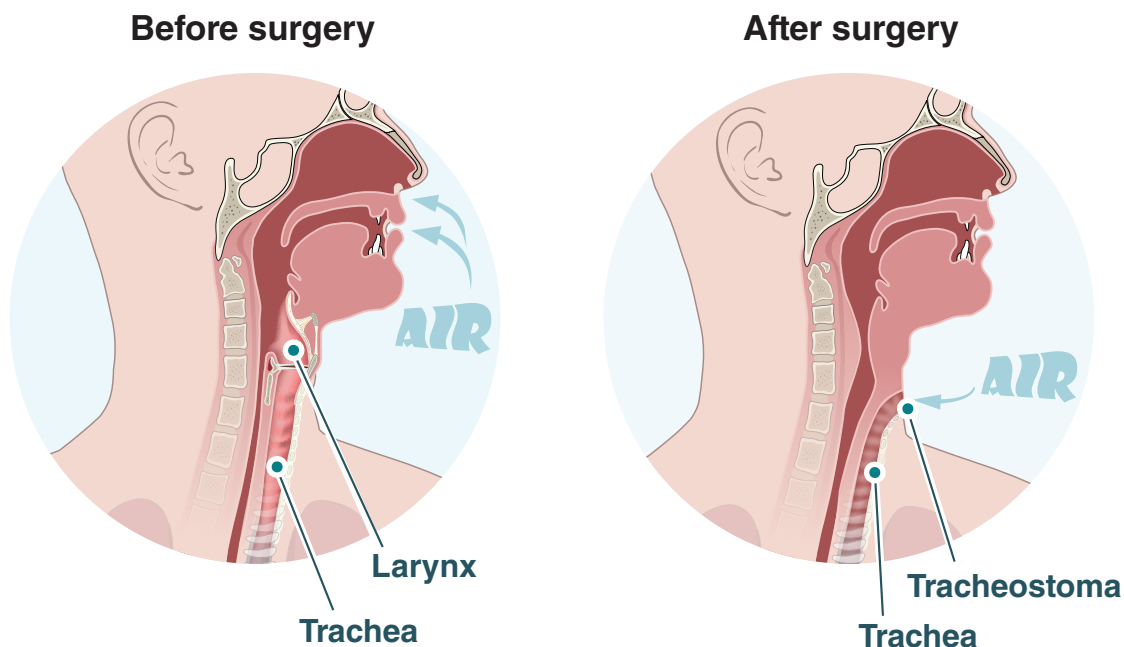
### 1. Total laryngectomy

A total laryngectomy is when the **larynx** (voice box) is removed. Your surgeon will make a cut in your neck. Then, they will move your **trachea** (windpipe) to this opening in your neck. This opening is called a **tracheostoma**. You will breathe through this opening.

This booklet tells you more about this surgery and what happens after it:

**Laryngectomy Care for patients, families, and friends booklet**

<http://www.muhcpatienteducation.ca/pdf-guide.html?guideID=809>



# What is a major head and neck surgery?

## 2. Flap free reconstruction

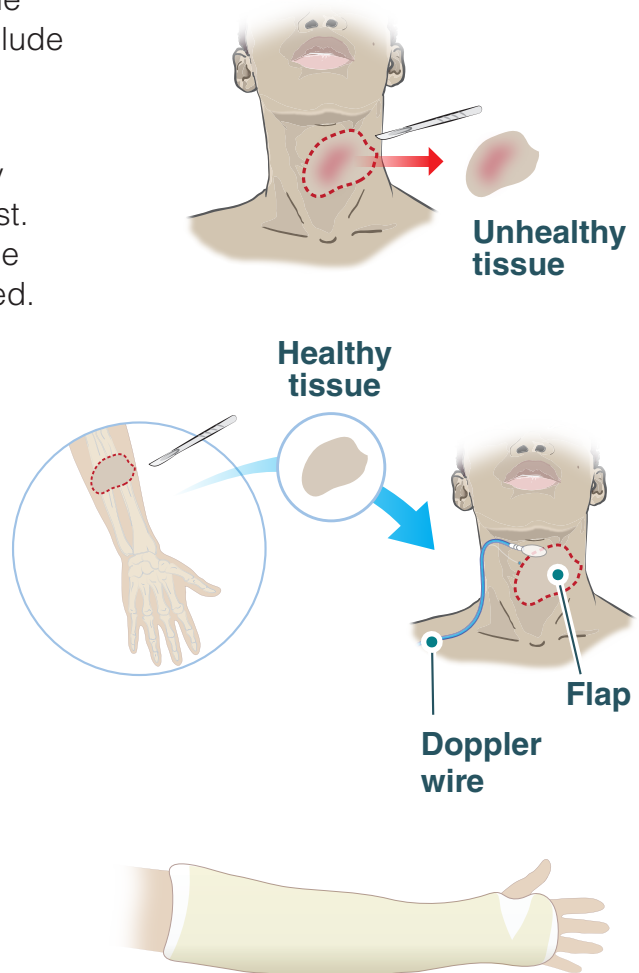
A flap reconstruction is a surgery that helps to cover an area where you had surgery. There are different types of flap reconstruction. Your surgeon will tell you which one you are having.

First, your surgeon will remove the **unhealthy tissue**. This could include skin, fat, muscle or bone.

Then, they will take some healthy tissue from your leg, arm, or chest. This healthy tissue will replace the unhealthy tissue that was removed. This is called the **flap**. To make sure there is good blood flow to your flap, the surgeon will place a temporary wire in your neck, called a **Doppler wire**. The flap replaces the unhealthy tissue that was removed.

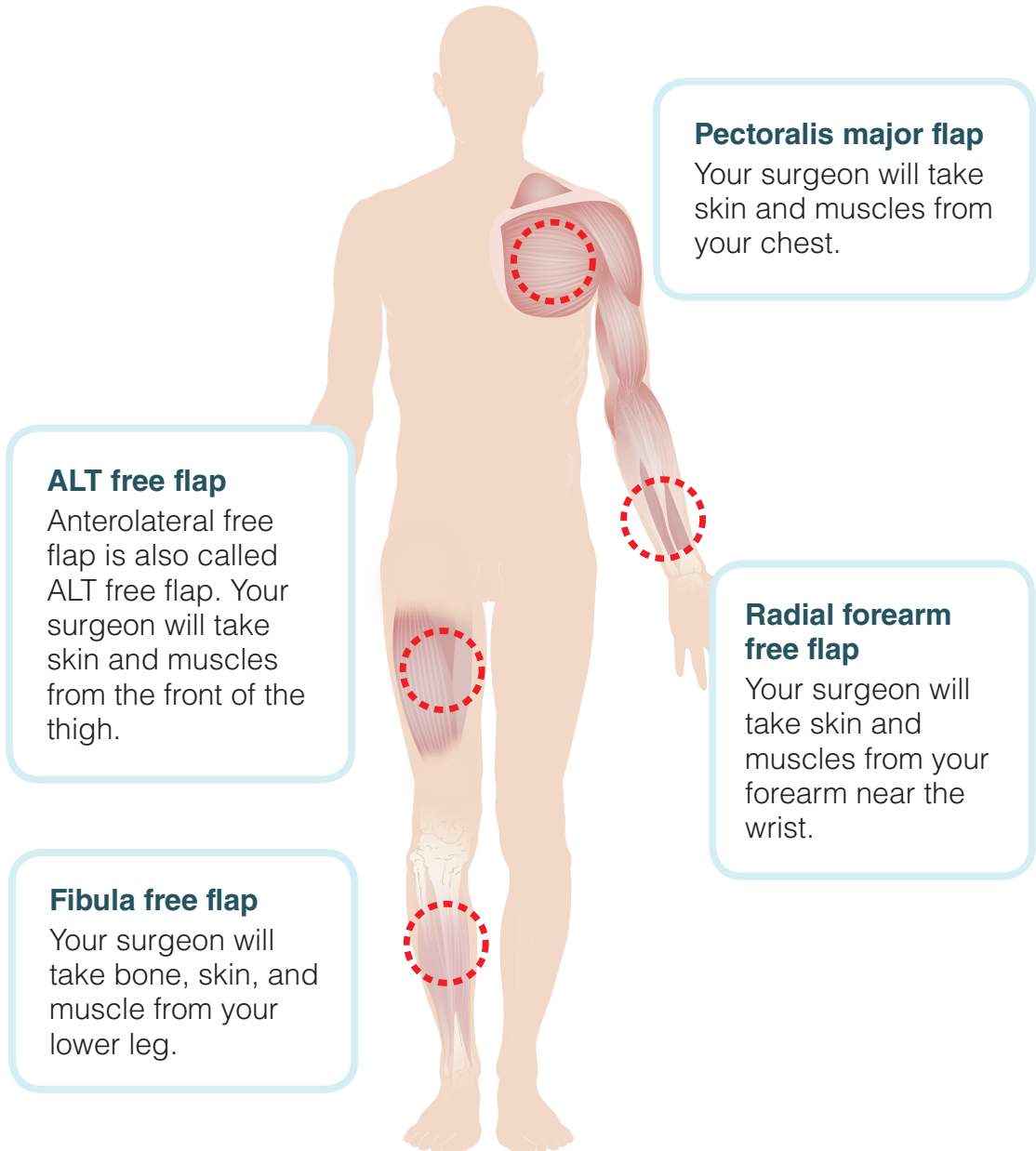
To replace the tissue taken from the flap, your surgeon will take a piece of skin, usually from the thigh. This is called a **skin graft**. A dressing will be used to cover this area.

Finally, your surgeon will cover the area of the skin graft with a dressing and/or a cast.



## What is a major head and neck surgery?

There are different types of flap reconstruction. Your surgeon will tell you which one you are having. These are the most common type of flaps.





## What is a major head and neck surgery?

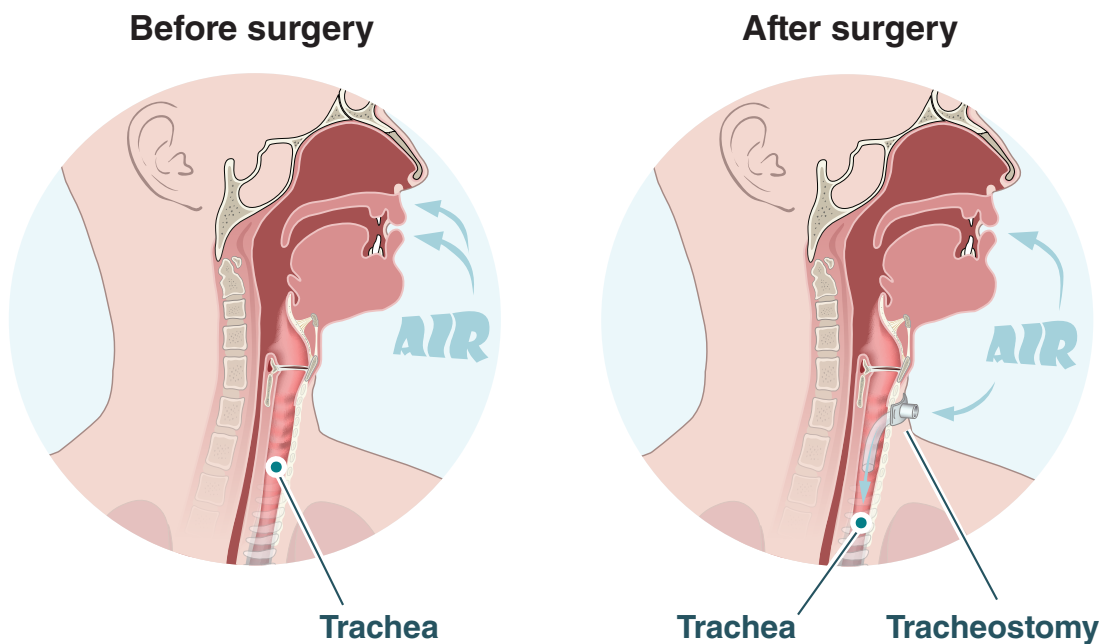
### 3. Tracheostomy

A tracheostomy, also called a tracheotomy, is a surgical opening made in the **trachea** (windpipe) to help you breathe easier. A tracheostomy tube is placed into the opening to keep it open. The tube allows you to breathe in air directly into your trachea.

The tracheostomy is usually temporary. If you go home with one, the booklet below will tell you more about it.

#### Tracheostomy Care for patients, families, and friends booklet

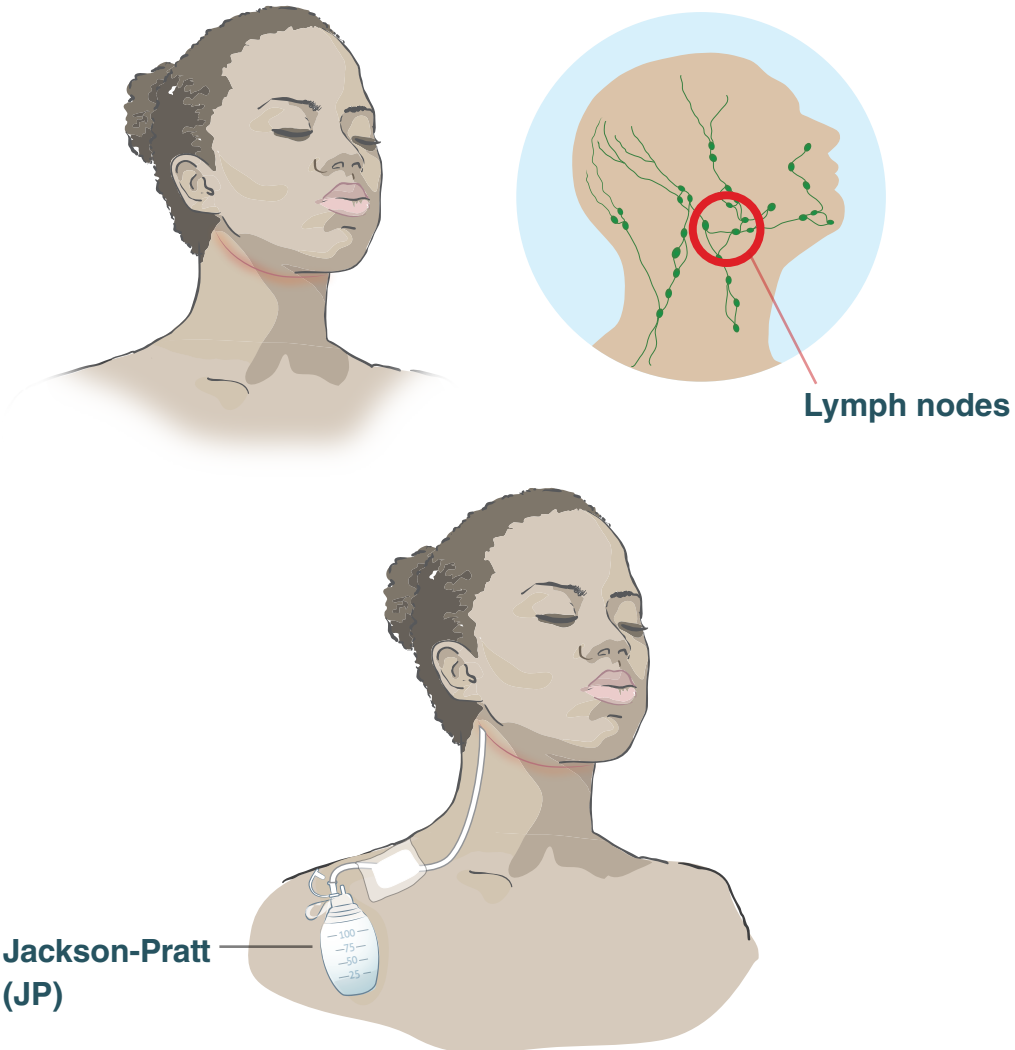
<http://www.muhcpatienteducation.ca/pdf-guide.html?guideID=548>



## What is a major head and neck surgery?

### 4. Neck dissection

Neck dissection is a surgery to take out the **lymph nodes** from your neck. After we take out the lymph nodes, we put a 1 or 2 drains (tubes) in your neck. This drain is called a **Jackson-Pratt (JP)**. It helps remove blood and fluid from your body. The drain will be removed before you go home.



## Who are the members of your head and neck team?

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**You are the most important member of the head and neck team.**

**You can play an active role in your health by:**

- Understanding your medical condition
- Following advice we give you
- Being involved in your care

### Who are the other members of the head and neck team?

Your head and neck team includes doctors, nurses and other health professionals. They work together to help you get better. You will have regular contact with different members of the head and neck team.

- **Doctors**

The **surgeon** is the doctor who will do your head and neck surgery. They will also be involved in your care after surgery.



The **oncologist** is a cancer specialist. They use medication called chemotherapy, radiation and immunotherapy to help your body get rid of cancer.



## Who are the members of your head and neck team?

- Nurses**

**Unit nurses** will care for you while you are in the hospital.

The **pivot nurse** makes sure that all the health care professionals involved in your care work together.

The **nurse in advanced clinical practice or assistant nurse manager** helps you prepare for when you go home.

The **liaison nurse** coordinates your health care with your CLSC when you are at home. They can also refer you to other community resources if needed.



- Other members of your head and neck team**

The **speech language pathologist** will help you get back to eating, drinking and talking (or communicating) after your surgery.

The **nutritionist** will give you advice about what you can eat before and after your surgery.

The **respiratory therapist** will make sure you are able to breathe normally during and after your surgery.

The **physiotherapist** will teach you to do exercises to get your strength and mobility back and to stay strong after your surgery.

The **occupational therapist** will teach you how to manage in your daily routine at home or at work.

The **social worker** will help you and your family cope with any emotional, social and financial difficulties.



## Follow up

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**If you have any questions, please phone us.**

<b>Dr. Kost</b>	<b>514-934-1934, ext. 34978</b>
<b>Dr. Richardson</b>	
<b>Dr. Sadeghi</b>	
<b>Dr. Zeitouni</b>	

Other surgeon: .....

### **Head and neck pivot nurse:**

Name: .....

Phone: 514-934-1934, ext. ....

### **Speech language pathologist:**

Name: .....

Phone: 514-934-8028

Room D04.7510 (Block D, level 4)

### **Other phone numbers:**

#### **Surgical North Clinic – ENT Clinic**

Tel: 514-934-1934, ext. 34978

Room: DS1. 3310 (Block D, level S1)

#### **Cedar Cancer Centre**

Tel: 514-934-4400

Room: DRC.1438 (Block D, level RC)

#### **MUHC Appointment and Referral Centre**

Tel: 514-934-8488 (Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

#### **Info-Santé**

Tel: 811 (Contact a nurse for non-urgent health issue,  
24 hours a day, and 365 days a year)

## Glen site parking information

Note that these rates were in effect in May 2018 and could have changed since the printing of this booklet.

For any updated information, visit:

<https://muhc.ca/patient-and-visitor-parking#glen>



### Daily Rate

Less than 2 hours	<b>FREE</b>
2h - 3h59	<b>\$6</b>
4-24 hours	<b>\$10</b>

### Parking Pass Rate

7 days	<b>\$45</b>
30 days	<b>\$90 *</b>

### Parking Rate for Frequent User \*

A frequent user is an out-patient who visits the hospital by car for their appointments or treatments at least ten (10) times per month.

**\* These parking rates do not apply to the staff nor its physicians.**

7 days	<b>\$22.50</b>	Unlimited entry and exit at the hospital where the pass was purchased. Certain conditions apply
30 days	<b>\$45</b>	

10 visits (flexible)	<b>\$30</b>	1 entry and 1 exit per visit, no expiry date
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### Where to Pay



By debit card or credit card  
Visa or MasterCard

**Customer Service  
Parking Office**



By credit card  
Visa or MasterCard

**Barrier gate at exit**  
(hourly parking only)

### Contact Us



#### Parking Service Desks



Montreal General Hospital  
Lachine Hospital  
Royal Victoria Hospital  
Montreal Chest Institute  
Montreal Children's Hospital  
Montreal Neurological Hospital

#### Location

L6 – 129  
OJ4  
D RC.1000  
D RC.1000  
A RC.1000  
E3-61

#### Extension

43626  
77001  
32330  
32330  
23427  
34625

## Notes

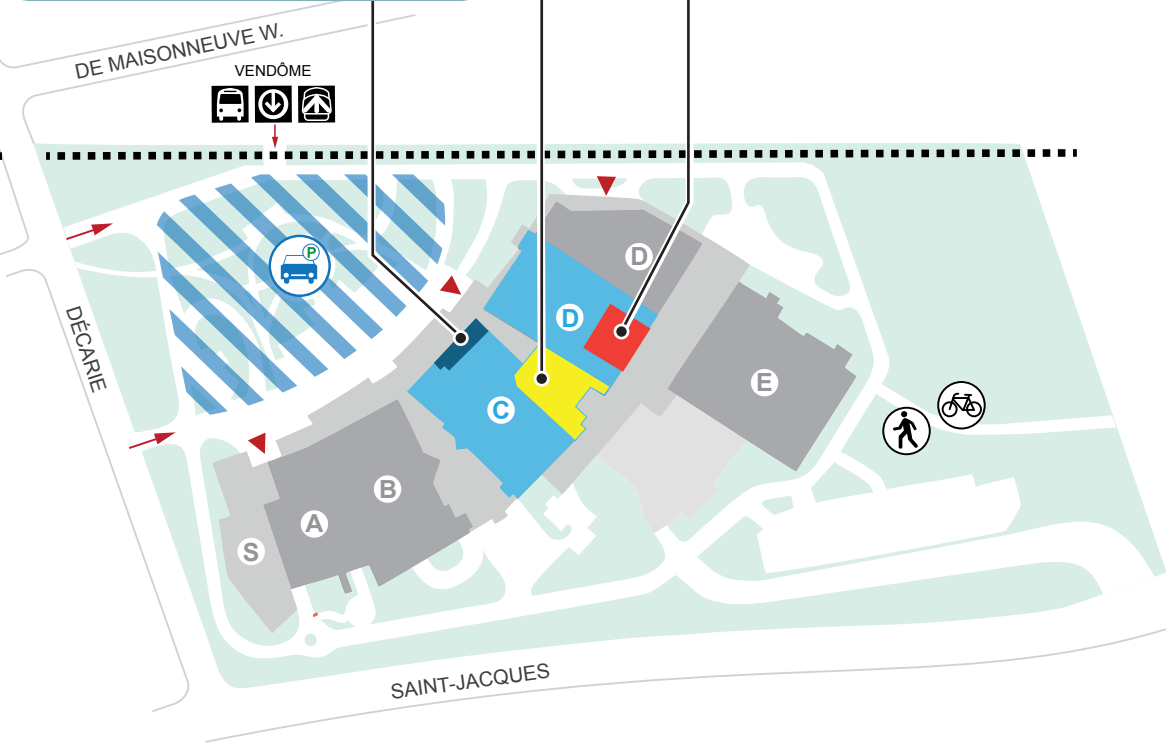
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# Map of Royal Victoria Hospital - Glen site

**Cafeteria:**  
Located off the Atrium  
on the S1 level

**Surgery Registration:**  
C03.7055 (Block C, level 3)

**RVH Surgical North Clinic  
ENT Clinic:**  
D S1.3310 (Block D, level S1)



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Office d'éducation des patients  
Patient Education Office

**A + B** Montreal Children's Hospital

**C + D** Royal Victoria Hospital

**D** Montreal Chest institute

**D** Cedars Cancer Centre