

# 5 WAYS TO SAVE OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS

## AND HELP PAY FOR YOUR SURGERY

When considering surgery of any kind, cost is often a critical factor in determining whether to have the procedure. But, it does not have to be the deciding factor. **With some careful planning and a few savvy financial strategies, you can reduce or eliminate** your out-of-pocket costs, making surgery a viable option.

**Here are ways to save** out-of-pocket costs to help make your surgery more affordable.





# MAKE YOUR DEDUCTIBLE WORK FOR YOU

If you have private health insurance, timing your surgery for when you have met your annual deductible—or in a year in which you plan to have a lot of health care expenses—can help you save



You can minimize the amount you have to pay for the rest of the year by scheduling your surgery now. In most instances, insurance deductibles reset on January 1, so scheduling your surgery early in the year may help significantly reduce your out-of-pocket costs for the rest of the year.



Meet your deductible faster and give you the opportunity to receive more health benefits later at a lower out-of-pocket cost.



If you don't anticipate meeting your deductible this year, but expect to have a lot of medical expenses in the last three months of the year, a third option is to [contact your insurance provider to ask about "fourth-quarter rollover."](#) Some health insurance companies will allow dollars paid toward your deductible in the final months of the calendar year to count toward next year's annual deductible, giving you a head start on meeting your deductible. You can then plan to schedule your surgery in the new year when you will be closer to meeting your deductible.<sup>1</sup>



Be sure to check with your health insurer to [verify when your deductible resets](#) so that you can plan accordingly. By planning to have surgery after your deductible is met, you can significantly reduce your out-of-pocket costs for the procedure.



# FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNTS: IT'S YOUR MONEY, USE IT

If you have been setting aside money through an employer-sponsored flexible spending account (FSA), you must use your funds before the plan year ends or you lose it.



Money in an FSA is tax-free and can be used to help pay for qualified medical expenses associated with your surgery.<sup>2</sup>



Some employers offer a rollover or grace period to use 2014 funds in 2015, allowing you to double up on available funds.



Even more reason to use your FSA for your NueStep procedure: the savings limit has increased to \$2,550 - the highest in years!



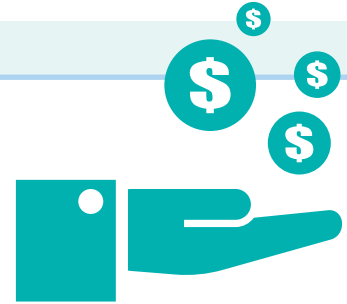
<sup>2</sup> <http://healthequity.com/resourcecenter/learnaboutfsas/fsafaqs>



# FINANCE

## YOUR SURGERY WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK

If you don't have health insurance or have catastrophic coverage only, no- or low-interest financing options exist.



First, **ask your doctor's office** if they offer a low- or interest-free payment plan for your surgery.



If your health care provider does not offer a payment plan, there are several third-party finance options available, such as a loan. Be sure to **compare interest rates** so you can get the best rate available.



In comparison to some third-party financing options, promotional credit card offers may be more affordable. These **short-term zero or low-interest rates** can help save you money if used carefully. But, make sure you know when the offer expires because your interest rate can rise dramatically. If you are still making payments on your surgery when the offer expires, it may be necessary to transfer the balance to a card with a lower interest rate.<sup>3,4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_5604671\\_finance-medical-dental-procedures-interest.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_5604671_finance-medical-dental-procedures-interest.html)

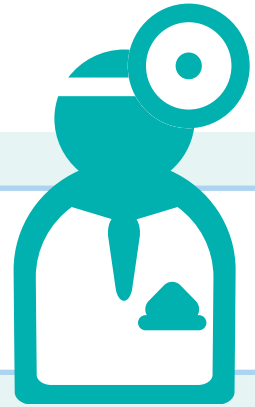
<sup>4</sup> [http://surgery.about.com/od/beforesurgery/ss/PayingSurgery\\_9.htm](http://surgery.about.com/od/beforesurgery/ss/PayingSurgery_9.htm)



# SHOP

## AROUND

Not all physicians and surgeries are created equal. Nor are their costs.



Find out if your provider accepts your health plan. Insurance coverage can make a big difference in procedure costs.



At [www.healthcarebluebook.com](http://www.healthcarebluebook.com), you can find fair prices for surgery based on the average fee that providers in your area accept as payment from insurers.<sup>5</sup>

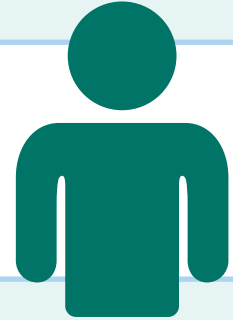


In addition, you can find resources that can help you assess the quality of a health care provider, such as a physician finder through your state's medical board.



# RALLY YOUR SUPPORT SYSTEM

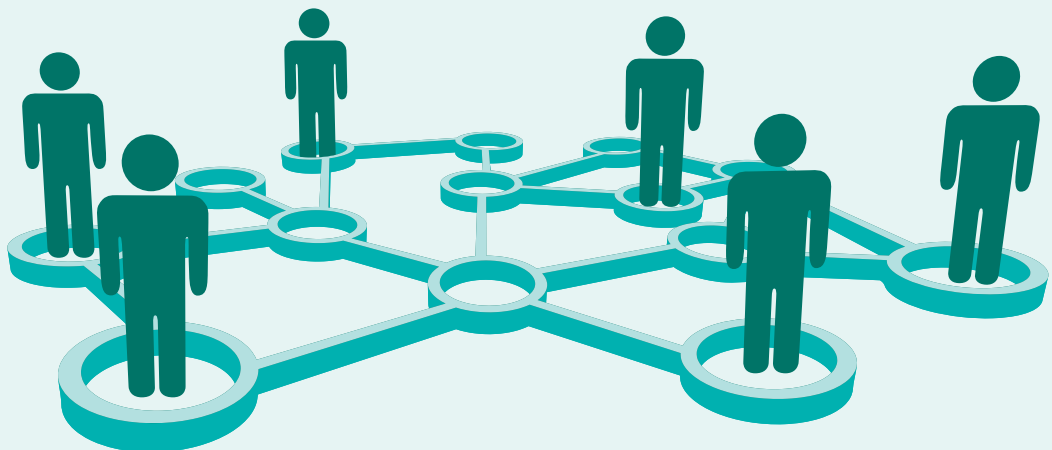
Your friends and family have seen you suffer with chronic pain. Let them be a part of your healing process.



Rather than bringing gifts to your next birthday or holiday celebration, they can make donations to help pay for your surgery.



A crowdfunding website like [gogetfunding.com](http://gogetfunding.com) allows you to create your own fundraising cause for a small fee. It's a fun and easy way for friends and family to pitch in to make your life better!



# PAYING FOR SURGERY CAN BE CHALLENGING,

BUT YOU CAN SAVE MONEY BY BEING A SMART HEALTH CARE CONSUMER.



By taking full advantage of your health insurance benefits, making sure you know the market value of the surgery you want to have and the quality of your surgeon, and researching the lowest interest rates to cover surgical costs not covered by your insurance, you can make surgery affordable for you.

