This program is sponsored by the International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders. The views and opinions expressed in this presentation do not necessarily reflect the official position of IFFGD. Information and resources shared should not replace any medical care you are receiving. Finally, it is important to always consult with your doctor or other health care provider before making decisions about your treatment.

The following slides were presented during the educational portion of IFFGD’s 2020 Virtual Advocacy Event. To view this presentation and the all videos available during this program, please visit [https://bit.ly/Adv_Edu](https://bit.ly/Adv_Edu).

Making Your Surgeon a Part of Your Healthcare Team

Dr. David F. Mercer MD PhD
Professor of Surgery
Director of Intestinal Rehabilitation Program
University of Nebraska Medical Center
Groups that may not understand you.

• Family
• Friends
• Employers/co-workers
• The entire medical profession.

How you might be involved with a surgeon

• You may never need one
• “Surgeon du jour”
• Referral from GI caregiver
  • May or may not have specific experience
• Dedicated multidisciplinary team
About surgeons...

- Surgeons like things they understand
- Surgeons don’t like things they don’t understand
- They will apply what they know to your situation
- They have little training in functional disorders

Finding a surgeon to help you

- Can be very tough
- Experience is hard to find
- Ask your main GI provider
  - Also ask “why” they recommend that person
- Major intestinal failure centers
- Advocacy groups
- Social media
- Clinicaltrials.gov
Prepare in advance

• Notes from previous operations sent in advance of appointment (or bring with)
• Know your own anatomy
• Questions written down

You should feel

• Comfortable
• That you were heard
• That you understand what is going to happen
• How the surgeon fits in the context of your care team
Some don’ts

• Don’t tell them every previous surgeon was an idiot
• Don’t insist on surgery
• Don’t be unrealistic in expectations
• Don’t ask for pain meds at your first visit

• Surgery is intimate
• Surgery can be dangerous
• Surgery is a journey
• YOU are your best advocate
Further questions:

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