# Prehabilitation gains ground as essential step to boost surgical success



The Irish News (Belfast) is reporting on the growing recognition of the importance of 'prehabilitation'—preparing the body through healthy lifestyle changes prior to surgery—as a vital factor in achieving better surgical outcomes. This concept applies across a wide spectrum of operations, from extensive procedures like liver transplants to more routine interventions such as dental implants.

Lucy Stock, principal dentist at Gentle Dental Care in Belfast, highlights that prehabilitation focuses on enhancing patients’ health well ahead of surgery to support immune function, reduce inflammation, and accelerate wound healing. "Prehabilitation is all about boosting the immune system, changing it from a stuttering Ford into a purring Ferrari," she explains.

The process typically involves adopting a healthier diet that excludes high sugar and heavily processed foods, while prioritising nutrient-rich, immune-stimulating whole foods. Recommended dietary components include a diverse range of colourful vegetables and fruits, high-quality proteins, plenty of plain water, increased fibre, and beneficial fats sourced from nuts and seeds. These changes aim to nourish the microbiome—the community of bacteria in the mouth and gut that plays a crucial role in overall health. Stock points out that "most of us are bacteria deficient, which leads to weight gain and disease," and that this condition can be improved by adding probiotics such as yogurts, kefir, and fermented foods.

Lifestyle factors beyond diet are also integral to prehabilitation. Strategies such as stress reduction, improved sleep, cessation or reduction of smoking, and increased physical activity contribute significantly to the effectiveness of surgical treatment and recovery.

Stock shares a personal anecdote underscoring the benefits of prehabilitation. A friend in his mid-50s faced a difficult decision about undergoing a liver transplant due to concerns about his age and health. Initially unfit, overweight, and consuming a poor diet, he was hesitant to proceed. However, after making substantial lifestyle improvements—including a better diet and increased exercise—he successfully underwent the transplant with positive long-term results.

The approach of prehabilitation reflects a shift toward recognising the vital role patients' health status before surgery plays in treatment success. By taking proactive measures to optimise their condition, patients might not only improve their recovery prospects but also potentially extend the durability and effectiveness of surgical interventions.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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