How to Talk with Your Doctor About
Music During Surgery
(or other medical or dental procedures)

Don't wait! If you or a loved one are planning to have a medical procedure now or in the future, you MUST know this important information about music's power during your medical procedures!

Surgery is something that no one looks forward to. People fear the pain, the anesthesia, the possibility of not waking up, and even the expense.

If you want to ask your doctor about using music during your procedure, read this now! Find the words you need to communicate.

Step by Step
Dr. Cash provides with examples of questions and responses

For nearly two decades, Dr. Alice Cash has been helping people use the music that they already love to heal their lives and increase their wellness quotient! Dr. Alice Cash is one of the world's only clinical musicologists and holds a powerful and unique set of credentials. She has worked with people and diagnoses of all kinds, enabling them to find healing, acceptance and hope. To hear her speak, and watch in her in action is to have a day that will amaze, educate, motivate, and inspire you! To hire Alice for your association or organization: http://www.healingmusicenterprises.com/speaker.html
Talking with Your Physician or Surgeon about Taking Music into Surgery

By Dr. Alice H. Cash, Ph.D., LCSW

“Doctor, I would like to listen to music while I undergo surgery. I’ve read a lot about it in the news recently and I’m hearing more and more than there are so many good reasons to do it. My research shows that there are benefits beyond what you might think! Besides, I’m a little nervous and I think this would help me!”

That would be alright with me ...

“Great, I have an MP3 player with some soothing music that I would like to use. It’s very small and shouldn’t be in the way.”

It may be just that simple. Your doctor may sense a little fear of the unknown and the undeniable risks that go along with surgery.

A good timing for your request might be when the doctor is explaining what is going to happen. He will go through a pre-surgery list that may include items:

- What time to be ready
- What you can or can not eat prior to surgery
- He will ask for your emergency contacts
- How long the process will take – including post-operation steps
- He will ask if you have a “living will”
- He will ask you to sign a “release statement”

It is common for everyone to become a little anxious.
Let me repeat: If the topic has not come up by then, it is a great time to discuss how you would like to listen to music during your procedure.

Perhaps your Surgeon is uncertain or asks why ...

“Medical research, articles from respected publications, and my own study have shown that listening to music has many benefits. AND it will help me feel more positive!”

Benefits:

“According to articles I’ve read in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal and have seen on Web MD and the BBC site, music calms and relaxes the patient so that they are much less anxious and tense. They say that the muscles relax and stay relaxed because of the slow, steady pulse of the music and therefore your body needs less anesthesia to keep it relaxed!”

“Every year I hear from friends and family who have had negative responses to anesthesia or experienced pain that caused them to take pain medication for months and years. If music through headphones can prevent or reduce that, shouldn’t I give it a try?”

Additional Benefits that you may experience from listening to music during surgery:

- Up to 50% less anesthesia needed
  - Patient's body is already relaxed if the correct music is chosen

- Less medical intervention needed
- Pulse of music stabilizes bio-rhythms

- Less anxiety medication prior to surgery
- Less pain medication in the recovery room
- Headphones block out surgical room sounds
- Faster recovery; patient leaves hospital sooner

Research:

“There are many, many published studies that you can see online at the [www.PubMed.gov](http://www.PubMed.gov) which is the U.S. National Library of Medicine. A search in September of 2008 reveals that there are 689 published studies having to do with music and surgery! These studies come literally from every part of the world and from every possible medical specialty.

Medical Journal Study:

World Journal of Gastroenterology 2006 Dec 14;12(46):7532-6. This study looked at various GI procedures. This study concluded that “Music therapy is an effective tool for stress relief and analgesia in patients undergoing gastrointestinal endoscopic procedures.

Another study from 2005 is in the journal *Ambulatory Anesthesia* and is titled “Music and Ambient Operating Room Noise in Patients Undergoing Spinal Anesthesia” This study concluded that “when controlling for ambient OR noise, intraoperative music decreases propofol requirements of both Lebanese and American patients who undergo urological surgery under spinal anesthesia.”
Another research study documenting music’s effect is from the journal *Anesthesia Analgesia* 2005 Jul;101(1):103-6, and the study was called The effect of music on preoperative sedation and the bispectral index.

The study concluded that “In conclusion, listening to music during midazolam premedication is associated with an increase in sedation level in the preoperative period as reflected by a lower BIS value.”

When going online to read about the research that has been done on music with surgery, there are well over a hundred clinical studies that have been done.

Frequently Asked Questions:

**Will an MP3 be allowed in the operating room?:** In 2008, MP3 players and iPods are brought into surgery every day. It’s probably best to bring a brand-new player into the O.R. but an older one can still be wiped down with disinfectant. Everything in the operating room must be disinfected but everything does not have to be sterilized; only the things that will be introduced into the patient’s body such as surgical instruments.

**How can I be sure that the music isn’t too soft or too loud?** The music used has been specially engineered to be at the ideal volume for most adults and children. However, there is a volume control on the Surgical Serenity MP3 player as well as on any MP3 player or iPod.

**What kind of music will I be listening to?** The Surgical serenity music is solo classical piano music with selections being unknown by the average person. This music has been chosen because musical associations are powerful and well-known music has good and bad associations for different people. Using unfamiliar but high-quality music eliminates the chance of hearing something that you could have a less than pleasant association.
Concluding thoughts

*Think about it*, if you can accomplish all of these things with something as simple as using the right music, isn't it worth having a conversation with your doctor before he operates?