

[IMAGE]

## **Surgery – Bad for Your Brain**

By Editorial Staff

While surgery is sometimes an absolute necessity, it's also a depressing fact that far too many surgical procedures are performed every day for conditions that might otherwise be treated conservatively - or for elective "improvements" that don't particularly require any type of care at all (many types of cosmetic surgery, etc.). That's an important reality to acknowledge because every surgical procedure (just like every medication, be it over the counter or prescription) comes with risks.

Consider a recent study that found seniors who underwent surgery had a higher risk of cognitive decline – *postoperative neurocognitive disorders* described by researchers as "postoperative delirium, an acute state of confusion and inattention; and postoperative cognitive dysfunction (POCD), a prolonged state of cognitive impairment that predominantly affects higher-level cognitive skills and memory." In some cases, these cognitive issues led to increased length of postoperative hospital stays, decreased quality of life, increased loss of function and even higher incidence of mortality. These complications were attributed to the surgical procedures including administration of anesthesia; with the authors speculating that underlying factors could include "neuroinflammation as a result of perioperative stress, vascular disorders, or the acceleration of neurocognitive decline in patients with a previously undiagnosed neurodegenerative disorder, such as preclinical dementia."

As we get into our golden years, maintaining brain function is critical, particularly since it's entirely possible that any one of us may experience cognitive decline either in its mild form (difficulty remembering certain events, etc.) or its more pervasive, severe form (Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia). Before you undergo any surgical procedure, talk to your health care team about nonsurgical alternatives; and mention the findings from this study to ensure your surgery, if absolutely necessary, goes as smoothly as possible.

Page printed from:

[http://www.toyourhealth.com/mpacms/tyh/article.php?id=2925&no\\_paginate=true&no\\_b=true](http://www.toyourhealth.com/mpacms/tyh/article.php?id=2925&no_paginate=true&no_b=true)