

A Day in the Life of a Surgical Technology Student

My name is Erin and I'm currently in the second semester of Surgical Technology at CCHS.

With one semester behind me, I feel like I've made a tremendous amount of progress toward mastering the skills essential for my profession. Concepts and terminology that seemed so foreign are beginning to make sense. However, this semester is proving to be even more academically challenging since I am taking Anatomy and Physiology along with the Surgical Technology class.

This semester I am scheduled for three half days of clinical work. Basically, clinical work means that I am at the hospital getting hands on experience on surgical technology. Think of it as an internship. I've never considered myself an early riser, but now I do since I must report for clinical by 6:45. Once I arrive and confirm my assignment, I introduce myself to the staff also assigned to my patient. It is amazing the number of people that make up the team involved in caring for the surgical patient, each one contributing their knowledge and skills to provide the best outcome for the patient.

Today my assignment involves scrubbing on a Laparoscopic Donor Nephrectomy. My patient is the sibling of another patient and is donating one of her kidneys to her brother who is scheduled to receive the donated kidney that morning. Her brother has a history of renal failure due to complications with his diabetes. The procedure I am assigned to involves using technology that really benefits the patient. Using special instruments and a surgical camera, the surgeon can remove the kidney the sister is donating to her brother using a laparoscopic technique. This technique involves several small incisions instead of the larger traditional incision. Since the patient's incision is smaller, she will heal and recuperate in much less time. It's also really cool because the surgeons will be performing the procedure while viewing the inside of the patient on a TV monitor so I can actually see the anatomy described in my textbook.

My preceptor (a Certified Surgical Technologist), which is like a mentor, explained the instruments required for the procedure and their function while we were preparing for the case. I'm glad she's there to give me guidance as I'm a bit overwhelmed. During the procedure I pass the special tools and supplies to the surgeons. Working with the surgeon is a surgeon resident. He's learning how to perform the surgery. The surgeon is constantly teaching and explaining things to the resident. It's great to be at a "teaching hospital."

Later that night, I complete my clinical notes. Part of my assignment this semester involves submitting clinical notes on my assigned procedures; keeping a record of the information about the surgical procedure I obtained from my experience. I really found this procedure fascinating and when I expressed interest to my instructor she indicated she would schedule me on this procedure again as well as the procedure that involves transplanting the kidney in the renal failure patient.

Oh well, enough about surgery. I must also carve out some time to study Anatomy and Physiology because tomorrow I have a test that covers all the bones in the body. That knowledge will certainly be helpful when I'm assigned to scrub in the Orthopedic specialty.