

Historical Timeline of the Department of Surgery NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center



Date	Event
1791-1932	<p style="text-align: center;">General History:</p> <p>New York Hospital offers surgical services at its first and second locations.</p>
1878	<p style="text-align: center;">Division History: Orthopedic Surgery</p> <p>New York Hospital offers a clinic for orthopedic surgery in the Outpatient Department at its second location on West 15th and 16th Streets between Fifth and Sixth Avenues.</p>
1887-1893	<p style="text-align: center;">Division History: Otolaryngology</p> <p>New York Hospital offers a clinic for nose and throat diseases in the Outpatient Department at its second location on West 15th and 16th Streets.</p>
1898-1932	<p style="text-align: center;">General History:</p> <p>Cornell University Medical College trains medical students in surgical procedures in the Department of Surgery led by Dr. Lewis Stimson. In addition, surgical specialties are taught in the following special departments: Laryngology and Rhinology, Otology, Ophthalmology, Orthopedic Surgery, and Genito-Urinary Diseases (Urology). In addition, the college offers patient care in these surgical specialties in the college's dispensary.</p> <p>Dr. Charles Gibson becomes chairman after Dr. Stimson's death in 1917.</p>
1898	<p style="text-align: center;">Division History: Anesthesiology</p> <p>Dr. Thomas Bennett is hired as an anesthesiologist at New York Hospital. Later in 1902, the Private Patient Service had its own anesthesiologist. Along with doctors, nurses administer anesthetics.</p>

1900

Division History: Otolaryngology and Ophthalmology

Dr. John Adams is hired by New York Hospital as a consulting otologist and ophthalmologist.

1909

Division History: Dentistry

Dr. Henry Sage Dunning is hired by New York Hospital as a consulting dental surgeon.

1911

Division History: Urology

New York Hospital offers a genito-urinary clinic at its House of Relief facility on Hudson Street.

**1911-
1967**

Division History: Second (Cornell) Surgical Division

Cornell University Medical College begins an affiliation with Bellevue Hospital that offers surgical services under the Second (Cornell) Surgical Division. The affiliation continues at New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center.

1912

Division History: Dentistry

A dental clinic is organized at New York Hospital.

1920

Division History: Urology

James Buchanan Brady, a wealthy benefactor, dies leaving money in his will for a urological service at New York Hospital. The urology department is organized as the James Buchanan Brady Foundation and opens in December. The department, located on the second floor of the Private Patients Building, features an outpatient clinic and inpatient beds. Later the department grows to include an x-ray facility and a clinic for cancer of the urinary tract. An artist, a pathologist, and a librarian are members of the staff. In 1925, a pay clinic is established.

1921

Division History: Otolaryngology

A throat clinic is offered in the Outpatient Department of New York Hospital. Dr. Samuel Knopf is hired as a laryngologist.

**1925-
1926**

General History:

Dr. Rufus Stetson is hired by New York Hospital as a transfusionist in 1925. The following year, Dr. Frank Yeomans is hired as a proctologist (rectal diseases).

1927

In June, The Society of the New York Hospital and Cornell University sign an affiliation agreement leading to the formation of New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center.



1932-1939

1932

General History:

In September, New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center opens. The Department of Surgery is one of the five major clinical departments of the new medical center.

1932-1947

Dr. George Heuer serves as chairman/surgeon-in-chief.

1932

Along with general surgery, the department has sub-specialties in otolaryngology (Dr. Arthur Palmer), ophthalmology (Dr. Bernard Samuels), orthopedic surgery (Dr. Charlton Wallace), and urology. Both clinical services and teaching programs are offered.

Division History: Anesthesiology

An anesthesia service, led by Dr. Ella Hediger, is a section under the Department of Surgery.

1932

Division History: Surgical Pathology

The Surgical Pathology Laboratory, led by Dr. N. Chandler Foot, performs routine diagnosis of pathological specimens removed during surgeries.

Division History: Urology

The urology clinics, from Cornell University Medical College's Pay Clinic and New York Hospital's Outpatient Department, merge to form the Cornell Urology Service led by Dr. Alexander Stevens. The James Buchanan Brady Foundation, led by Dr. Oswald Lowsley, continues as a separate urological service.

1932-1936

Division History: Dentistry

A dental clinic, led by Dr. A. LeRoy Johnson, is operated under the Department of Surgery. A dental hygienist examines all patients admitted to the hospital. In 1936, Guggenheim Foundation for Dental Care takes over the oral hygiene services. All patients who have general anesthesia must have oral hygiene performed prior to the surgery to prevent bacterial infections.

1937

Medical Education Highlight: Nurse Anesthetists

The School for Nurse Anesthetists is organized.

**1937-
1958**

Division History: Physiotherapy

The Physiotherapy Department, which was organized at New York Hospital ca. 1928, is placed under the Department of Surgery. In 1950, it changes its name to the Division of Physical Medicine. In 1958, the division is placed under the Department of Medicine.



1940-1949

1940s

Research Highlight: Cardiology/Cardiovascular Surgery

Drs. Harold Stewart, chief of the Division of Cardiology, and George Heuer develop clinical criteria and surgical therapy for constrictive pericarditis.

1943

Division History: Anesthesiology

Anesthesiology is proposed as a sub-department by the Medical Board.

1944

Patient Care Highlight: Ophthalmology

The first eye bank in United States to store human corneas for transplant operations opens at New York Hospital. New York Hospital's first corneal transplant is performed the following year.

1945

Patient Care Highlight: Cleft Palate Speech Clinic

A cleft palate speech clinic, one of the first of its kind in the country, is established.

**1947-
1967**

General History:

Dr. Frank Glenn serves as chairman/surgeon-in-chief.

1947

Medical Education Highlight: Televised Surgery

In September, RCA broadcasts the first televised operations performed at New York Hospital to the American College of Surgeons' conference at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York.

Division History: Plastic Surgery

Plastic Surgery is developed as a division with an outpatient clinic and inpatient beds. Dr. Herbert Conway, the chief of plastic surgery, had begun developing a plastic surgery service in 1935 when a Plastic Surgery Clinic was opened in the Outpatient Department.

Division History: Neurosurgery

Neurosurgery is more formally developed with an outpatient clinic and inpatient beds. Dr. Bronson Ray, chief of neurosurgery, had begun developing the neurosurgery service in 1936.

1948

Division History: Dental Surgery

Dental Surgery, led by Dr. Stanley Behrman, is more formally organized.

1949

Division History: Urology

In September, the Cornell Urology Service and the James Buchanan Brady Foundation merges to form one urology division.

**Late
1940s-
1950s**

Division History: Cardiothoracic Surgery

Cardiothoracic surgery is developed with new advances such as open-heart surgery and artificial heart-lung machines.



1950-1959

**1951-
1955**

Division History: Orthopedic Surgery

The Division of Orthopedic Surgery is integrated with the Hospital for Special Surgery, which opens at its new location on East 70th Street in 1955.

1954

Research Highlight: Anesthesiology

Drs. Frank Glenn and Joseph Artusio develop ether analgesia, which allows a patient to be conscious without feeling any pain or memory of the surgery.

1955

Patient Care Highlight: Fracture Service

The Fracture Service, led by Dr. Preston Wade, is established in June.

Patient Care Highlight: Otolaryngology

The Speech and Hearing Clinic is approved for handicapped children in July. An audiologist position is first approved in 1950 by the Medical Board.

1956

Medical Education Highlight: Trauma Course

In June, the Postgraduate Course in Fractures and Other Trauma is offered by Cornell University Medical College for surgeons in the field. This course becomes an annual event.

1957

Division History: Dental and Oral Surgery

The Division of Dental Surgery is now called Division of Dental and Oral Surgery. The American Dental Association approves a residency program for oral surgery. Later in 1989, the division changes its name to Division of Dental, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. By 2003, the word "dental" had been dropped from the title.

Department History: Anesthesiology

In July, the Division of Anesthesiology, led Dr. Joseph Artusio, becomes an independent department at New York Hospital. It becomes a separate department at the medical college in 1967.

Patient Care Highlight: Tumor Registry

Dr. George Cornell establishes the Tumor Registry.

1958

Patient Care Highlight: Cardiothoracic Surgery/Open Heart Surgery

Open-Heart surgery is performed at the hospital using an artificial heart-lung machine.

**1958-
1961**

Research Highlight: Anesthesiology

Drs. Joseph Artusio and Alan Van Poznak develop methoxyflurane, a non-flammable ether inhalation anesthetic.



1960-1969

1960

Division History: Pediatric Surgery

In January, Pediatric Surgery, led by Dr. S. Frank Redo, opens as a joint unit under the Departments of Surgery and Pediatrics. The new unit offers general surgery, thoracic, cardiovascular, head and neck and abdominal surgeries. Children from premature infants to fourteen years of age are treated.

1962

Patient Care Highlight: Hypothermia Brain Surgery

Drs. Bronson Ray and Russel Patterson, Jr. use hypothermia to create a bloodless brain surgery for treatment of arterial aneurysms.

1963

Patient Care Highlight: Ophthalmology

Drs. Harvey Lincoff and John McLean begin performing cryosurgery for retinal detachments. Cryosurgery had already been in use for treating skin conditions and diseases in the Division of Dermatology under the Department of Medicine.

1963

Patient Care Highlight: Kidney Transplant

The renal group, led by Dr. Albert Rubin, performs first kidney transplant in the New York metropolitan area.

1964

Patient Care Highlight: Cardiothoracic Surgery

The Thoracic Surgery Unit opens in July for patients with cardiac and pulmonary disease.

1966

Patient Care Highlight: Kidney Transplants

The Kidney Transplant Program is established.

**1967-
1970**

General History:

Dr. C. Walton Lillehei serves as chairman/surgeon-in-chief.

1968

Patient Care Highlight: Heart Transplant

New York Hospital's first heart transplant is performed by a team of twelve doctors led by Drs. C. Walton Lillehei and Cranston Holman.

Department History: Ophthalmology and Otorhinolaryngology

In September, an affiliation with Manhattan Eye and Ear Hospital leads to the creation of the Departments of Ophthalmology, led by Dr. Donald Shafer, and Otorhinolaryngology led by Dr. James Moore.

1969

Patient Care Highlight: Heart and Lung Transplant

Heart and lung transplant is performed at New York Hospital.

1969

Patient Care Highlight: Multi-Transplant Surgery

A multiple transplant surgery is performed. A heart, two kidneys, a liver, and two corneas are taken from one patient and transplanted into six patients at the Memorial and New York Hospitals. The New York Hospital's annual report claims this was the largest multi-transplant operation in the world and the first intra-hospital transplant.

Division History: Pediatric Urology

The Children's Urological Pavilion opens on November 7th. This pavilion is jointly operated by the Departments of Surgery and Pediatrics.



1970-1979

1970-
1971

General History:

Dr. Preston Wade serves as acting chairman/surgeon-in-chief.

1971-
1974

Dr. Paul Ebert serves as chairman/surgeon-in-chief.

1973

Patient Care Highlight: Dr. Frank Glenn Surgical ICU

The Dr. Frank Glenn Surgical Intensive Care Unit opens in January and consists of nine beds for heart and lung surgery patients. Equipment for monitoring the patients is built into the walls or hangs from the ceiling.

Patient Care Highlight: Nathan and Joanne Cummings Operating Suite

The Nathan and Joanne Cummings Operating Suite opens in April consisting of three theaters for open-heart and other complicated surgeries. The equipment for anesthesia, hypothermia and heart-lung machine drop down from columns suspended from the ceiling.

1974-
1975

General History:

Dr. Bjorn Thorbjarnarson serves as acting chairman/surgeon-in-chief.

1975-
1991

Dr. G. Tom Shires serves as chairman/surgeon-in-chief.

**1976-
1977**

Division History: Burn Center

The first full service Burn Center in the New York metropolitan area opens in December. A 1977 expansion of the facility, which includes the FDNY Skin Bank, makes it the largest burn center in the country. In 1998, the burn center is renamed William Randolph Hearst Burn Center.



1980-2007

1986

Patient Care Highlight: Vasectomy

Dr. Marc Goldstein performs one of the first non-scalpel vasectomies in the United States.

1987

Patient Care Highlight: Ambulatory Surgery Center

The Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Ambulatory Surgery Center is dedicated on May 11th.

**1991-
1993**

General History:

Dr. Roger Yurt serves as acting chairman/surgeon-in-chief

1991

Patient Care Highlight: Laparoscopy

The New York Hospital's staff uses the laparoscopy for lymph node dissections, chest and pelvic surgeries, and hysterectomies.

1992

Patient Care Highlight: Breast Center

The Strang Cornell Breast Center is established.

1992

Patient Care Highlight: Urology

Drs. E. Darracott Vaughan and Aaron Perlmutter are the first in New York metropolitan area to use laser prostatectomy for benign prostate enlargement.

1993

Department History: Cardiothoracic Surgery

The specialty of cardiothoracic surgery, led by Dr. O. Wayne Isom, becomes its own department in July.

Department History: Urology

The Division of Urology, led by Dr. E. Darracott Vaughan, becomes a separate department in July.

**1993-
2002**

General History:

Dr. John Daly serves as chairman/surgeon-in-chief.

1994

Patient Care Highlight: Bone Marrow

A new bone transplant program, led by Dr. Subhash Gulati, is established.

**1998-
1999**

Department History: Orthopedic Surgery

The Division of Orthopedic Surgery, led by Dr. Russell Warren, becomes its own department.

1999

Patient Care Highlight: Breast Cancer

Breast surgeons at the medical center are the first in New York City to perform skin-sparing mastectomies. The breast cancer program is now called the Columbia Weill Cornell Cancer Centers.

2001

Department History: Neurological Surgery

The Division of Neurological Surgery, led by Dr. Philip Stieg, becomes its own department.

**2002-
2004**

General History:

Dr. William T. Stubenbord serves as acting chairman/surgeon-in-chief.

2002

Patient Care Highlight: Minimal Access Surgery

The Minimal Access Surgery Center is established for digestive diseases. Surgeries are performed using laparoscopy and robots.

2004-

General History:

Dr. Fabrizio Michelassi is appointed chairman/surgeon-in-chief.

2006

Patient Care Highlight: Bariatric Surgery

The Bariatric Surgery Center is the first in New York State and seventh in the nation to receive the highest accreditation rating by the American College of Surgeons.