

Patient Information

Physiotherapy advice following Laparoscopic Abdominal Surgery

Introduction

This leaflet gives you advice about the techniques recommended by the physiotherapy department to assist you with your recovery after your operation and reduce the risk of complications.

What are the after effects of having surgery?

Normal breathing relies on the contraction of various muscles, including your diaphragm. Anaesthetics and pain relieving medications used during surgery can affect the way these muscles work. In addition, the gas injected into the abdomen during your laparoscopic surgery can further restrict the movement of the diaphragm. This combined with surgery related pain and bed rest means that after surgery your breathing pattern may change, causing you to take shallow breaths. Also, your ability to clear any phlegm (secretions) from your chest may be reduced, which means you may develop a chest infection. It is therefore very important that you can cough effectively and move around in and out of bed comfortably. You will be prescribed pain relief to help you with this.

Who is more at risk?

You are more at risk of developing a chest infection if you:

- Are a smoker
- Have existing lung problems such as COPD
- Are overweight
- Were under anaesthetic for a long time
- Are not very mobile

What can you do to help prevent complications after your surgery?

After you wake up from your operation, it is important that you start deep breathing exercises. This should reduce your risk of developing a chest infection.

Deep breathing exercises

These can be done in any position that you find comfortable, although sitting upright tends to be the best. Ensure you have adequate pain relief as deep breathing can be uncomfortable.

1. Breathe in deeply, feeling your lower chest expand as far as possible. Try to keep your neck and shoulders relaxed
2. Hold the breath for up to 3 seconds
3. Let the air out gently
4. Repeat this 3 times, then "huff" with your mouth as if trying to clean spectacles
5. Repeat the exercise (steps 1. to 4.)

You can do these breathing exercises hourly but aim for at least 4 times a day

Patient Information

Coughing

Be sure that you can cough strongly and effectively after your operation, and cough as needed to clear any excess secretions from your chest. You may find it more comfortable to support your wound by placing your hands, a rolled towel or a pillow over the incision site. Bring your knees up slightly and lower your shoulders to reduce the strain on your wound sites.

Exercise

Activity is encouraged from day one following your surgery. Try to get out of bed as soon as possible (nursing staff are available to assist and advise where needed)

Benefits of early mobilisation include:

- Reduced risk of deep vein thrombosis (DVT)
- Reduced risk of developing a chest infection
- Improved wound healing

You should take regular exercise during the day, as outlined in your recovery plan.

- When sitting in bed or the chair, move your ankles up and down, bend and straighten your knees in turn.
- When in the chair, march your legs on the spot.
- Exercise as your wound pain allows
- Gradually increase your exercise following your operation until you are back to your normal level of activity.

If you have problems getting out of bed or mobilising, your nurse may refer you to a physiotherapist.

Sources of information

Conquest Hospital

Ashwinder Ellens, Team Lead Respiratory Physiotherapist,

Tel: (01424) 755255 Ext: 8122 (bleep 2698)

Martin Waights, Enhanced Recovery Nurse Practitioner

Tel: (01424) 755255 Ext: 8343

Eastbourne District General Hospital

Kirsten Mitchell, Team lead Respiratory Physiotherapist

Tel: (01323) 417400 (bleep 0721)

Jocelyn Jaun, Enhanced Recovery, Urology Nurse practitioner

Tel: (01323) 417400 Ext 3540 (bleep 0159)

Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) – details below.

Patient Information

Hand hygiene

The trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

This information is available in alternative formats such as large print or electronically on request. Interpreters can also be booked. Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) offices, found in the main reception areas:

Conquest Hospital

Email: palsh@esht.nhs.uk - Telephone: **01424 758090**

Eastbourne District General Hospital

Email: palse@esht.nhs.uk - Telephone: **01323 435886**

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:

Kirsten Mitchell, Team lead Respiratory Physiotherapist (bleep 0721)

Chris Scanlan, Consultant anaesthetist, Conquest (Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS) Lead clinician)

Alison Gidlow, Tessa Rodgers and Jo Gainsford, Urology nurse specialists.

Anne Hanaway, Xiaoling Tang, Natasha Ewen, Urology ward sisters.

Martin Waights, Enhanced Recovery Nurse Practitioner, Conquest.

Ashwinder Ellens, Team Lead Respiratory Physiotherapist, Conquest

The directorate group that have agreed this patient information leaflet: Planned division.

Date agreed: April 2013

Review date: April 2014

Responsible clinician/author: Jocelyn Jaun, Enhanced Recovery Urology Nurse practitioner

Draft version written by: Abbie Sayer, 2008

Revised by: Kirsten Mitchell, Team lead Respiratory Physiotherapist
and Jocelyn Jaun, Enhanced Recovery Urology Nurse practitioner