

Post Emergency Surgery Discharge Information

What is Post Surgery Discharge Information?

Complications do not happen very often, but it is important that you know what to look for. During the first two weeks after surgery, if you are worried about any of the following, please contact your GP.

Abdominal Pain

You will most likely suffer griping pains during the first week following removal of a portion of the bowel. The pain usually lasts for up to a few minutes and will go away completely between spasms.

Severe pain that lasts for several hours may indicate leakage of fluid from the area where the bowel has been joined together. This can be a serious complication, although it is quite rare. Should it occur, it may be accompanied by fever. Occasionally a leak may occur which makes you feel generally unwell and causes fever but without pain.

If you have severe pain lasting more than one to two hours or have a fever and feel generally unwell, you should contact your GP. Out of hours please ring 111 where you can discuss your concerns.

Your wound

It is not unusual for your wound to be slightly red and uncomfortable during the first one to two weeks. Please let your GP know if your wound is:

- Becoming inflamed, painful or swollen
- Starting to discharge fluid

If you have clips or removable stitches they should be removed between 10 and 14 days after your surgery. You will either need to make an appointment with your Practice Nurse at your GP surgery for this or a District Nurse visit may have been arranged for you.

You will be given wound dressings and a clip remover on discharge if needed.

We advise that you shower and do not soak in the bath until your wound is healed.

Your bowels

Your bowel habits may change after part of your bowel is removed. Your motions may initially be loose but you may also become constipated. Your bowels are likely to be unsettled for up to 2 weeks after your surgery. Make sure you eat regular meals three or more times a day and take regular walks during the first two weeks after your operation.

If you have persistent diarrhoea for more than three days or if you are constipated for more than three to four days - we advise contacting your GP. If you need a laxative a stool softener such as Laxido or Lactulose are recommended, both are available without prescription.

For patients with a stoma only – (A **stoma** is an opening on the abdomen that can be connected to either your digestive or urinary system to allow waste (urine or faeces) to be diverted out of your body).

Your Stoma Care Nurse will give you a supply of stoma bags to take home and discuss how to obtain a further stock. Guidance on expected bowel function will be given to you while you are in hospital. A follow up appointment to see you in your home or the Stoma Care Department will also be arranged.

Passing urine

Sometimes after surgery, you may experience a feeling that your bladder is not emptying fully. This usually resolves with time. If it does not, or if you have excessive stinging when passing urine, please ring your GP as you may have an infection.

How soon will I be able to resume normal activities?

Exercise

Activity is encouraged from day one following your surgery. You should take regular exercise daily. Gradually increase your exercise during the four weeks following your operation until you are back to your normal level of activity. Do not undertake heavy lifting until six weeks following your surgery. If you are planning to jog or swim, wait until two weeks after your surgery and then start gradually. Common sense will guide your exercise and rehabilitation. If your wound is uncomfortable, go easy with your exercise. Once your wound is pain free, you can undertake most activities. Continue to wear your support stockings for two to three weeks.

Clexane (injections that are given to help prevent blood clots).

If you have been discharged with Clexane injections you must complete the course. You will have been provided with the correct number. Once you have administered the last dose, please close your sharps bin and place it on the door step on the allocated collection day (refer to council form given to you on discharge) for your local council to collect.

Driving

Do not drive until you are confident that you can do so safely, and make an emergency stop. This is usually four to six weeks. You should check with your insurance company before you start driving again.

Hobbies/ Activities

In general, you can take up hobbies and activities as soon as possible after your surgery. This will benefit your convalescence. However, do not do anything that causes significant pain or involves heavy lifting for the six weeks following your surgery.

When can I return to work?

Returning to work can vary from person to person and depends on the extent of surgery. If your surgery has been performed laparoscopically (key hole surgery) recovery time may be quicker. If your work involves heavy lifting, you will not be able to return to work for a number of weeks following your surgery depending on your occupation.

Useful Contact Information

Conquest Hospital

Main switchboard: 0300 131 4500

Gardner Ward: 0300 131 5129

Cookson Devas Ward: 0300 131 4500 ext 770490

Important information

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. It is not definitive. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible, but please be warned that it is always subject to change. Please, therefore, always check specific advice on a procedure or any other concerns you may have with your doctor.

Sources of information

This leaflet has been adapted from one used by Yeovil Hospital who have given their permission for it to be reproduced.

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 the Patient Experience Team – Tel: 0300 131 4731 (direct dial) or by email at: esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net

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

If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.

Tel: 0300 131 4434 Email: esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net

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:
Miss A Morris

The directorate group that have agreed this patient information leaflet:
ENTER NAME HERE, IF APPROPRIATE

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Responsible clinician/author: Jacinta Isles Matron Gardner Ward.

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