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The Royal Liverpool and  
Broadgreen University Hospitals



NHS Trust



“Me and my  
enhanced recovery.”

Simply,

a better  
recovery

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# Welcome to the Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Trust

As your operation approaches, we'd like to tell about a programme called 'enhanced recovery', which is simply a plan of care to help you to a better recovery after your surgery.

Throughout this booklet we will guide you through the enhanced recovery programme – what it is, how it works, the benefits to you and how it will hopefully speed up your recovery and get you home sooner.

You will also find information on how you can influence and promote your own recovery. By the end of this booklet you'll know more about the enhanced recovery programme, what you can expect from us, and also what we expect from you.



We hope that this booklet raises questions for you to ask about your operation and your recovery. These questions can be answered at any point in your treatment, giving you a more informed journey and a better recovery.

## Calling the hospital

If you need to call the hospital before your operation, our general enquiries number is  
**0151 706 2000**

Text phone number  
**1800101517062000**

## What is enhanced recovery

There are four key elements to the enhanced recovery programme:

- 1 Planning your operation properly and preparing you for surgery.
- 2 Using innovative and up-to-date techniques during surgery.
- 3 Supporting you after your surgery with effective pain relief.
- 4 Getting you mobile as soon as possible.

Enhanced recovery is clinically proven to provide the following benefits:

- you and your family are more involved in the decisions made around your treatment
- your independence is promoted
- there is a reduced risk of post operative complications such as chest infection or deep vein thrombosis (DVT)
- you can be discharged out of hospital sooner.

Enhanced recovery is a plan for you and for us, making simple, positive changes to the way you're looked after – before, during and after your operation.

Along the way, we ask you to play your part too, so you're actively involved in how you get better.

## Want to know more?

If you have any questions about why you're on an enhanced recovery programme, ask your GP.

# Preparing for your operation

## Pre-operative assessment

To prepare for your operation, you'll be asked to attend a pre-operative assessment. This could take up to two hours, so please be sure you allow enough time to attend.

At this appointment the pre-operative team will look at your current condition, your past medical history and also what medication you are taking. There will also be a brief assessment of your lifestyle and level of fitness.

A decision will be made about your suitability for the operation, and the surgery may not go ahead without this assessment.

At this appointment, you will also be given more information and reading material regarding your forthcoming stay, and how you can prepare for this.

**Feel unwell before your pre-op assessment?**

Talk to your GP now – don't wait until your pre-op appointment.

## Therapies you might need

### Physiotherapy

After your operation you may need to see a physiotherapist, and depending on your surgery, they may wish to see you before you come in for your operation. The physiotherapist will help you to become more mobile and independent after your operation. They will also help to prevent any complications after your operation (things like chest infections or blood clots) by teaching you breathing and leg exercises. Doing these exercises can help you to recover quicker after your operation.

## Occupational therapies

After your operation you may need to see an occupational therapist. Depending on your surgery, they may wish to see you before you are admitted. The main aim of occupational therapies is to promote your independence. They can help you get ready and be confident for work and daily activities.

## Speech and language therapies

Our speech and language therapists can support you if you have difficulty in swallowing (dysphagia) or in talking (dysphasia) after your operation. For most operations, it's unlikely you will need to see a speech and language therapist. However, if you feel that you have any swallowing or speech problems, please alert your nursing staff.

## Dietitian

Good nutrition is vital to making a fast recovery. During your pre-operative assessment you will have a simple nutritional screening. After this, you may be offered advice on what an appropriate diet would be, and you may be given nutritional supplements.

You may be referred to the dietitian, who will give specialist advice on diet, and what is best for your health and recovery – both after surgery and when you are discharged home.

## Let us know

Please tell us as soon as possible if you start to have problems after surgery. It helps us to help you recover quicker.



# Before your operation

## Smoking

If you're coming in to hospital for an operation, and you are a smoker, we strongly advise you to stop smoking because this will help you make the best recovery.

### Why is stopping smoking important?

Giving up smoking before your operation can reduce the risk of complications and improve your recovery.

After an operation, non-smokers are less likely to suffer ill effects from an anaesthetic. They will usually make a quicker recovery than smokers, with fewer complications, and their operation scar is likely to heal more quickly.

### Reasons to stop

- Research shows that, on average, smokers spend two days longer in hospital recovering from an operation than non-smokers.
- Smoking can also contribute to the development of post-operative lung and heart problems.
- Smokers are 12 times more likely to develop wound healing complications.
- As soon as you quit smoking, your body begins to repair itself straight away.

Furthermore, The Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospitals are smoke-free sites, so you will not be able to smoke anywhere in or around the hospital where you are having your surgery.

Whilst you're in hospital, you can get more advice on stopping smoking from one of our smoking cessation nurses.

## Support to quit

There are free local services you can access before your surgery who can help you to quit. Fag Ends is a free NHS service, who have lots of ways to help you. Call them on 0800 195 2131 to find out more about the ways they can help you.

## Drinking alcohol

You can eat and drink as normal before your operation, but please avoid drinking alcohol.

Before your surgery, you will receive an anaesthetic to give you relief from pain and discomfort. However, a risk after an operation and an anaesthetic is becoming temporarily confused, a condition called post-operative confusion. Regular or heavy alcohol consumption before your surgery can increase your risk of developing post-operative confusion. By not drinking alcohol before your operation, you will greatly reduce this risk, and improve your recovery.

There is local support available if you need help or advice cutting down your alcohol intake. Speak to your GP for further help and support. Whilst you're in hospital, you can talk to one of our alcohol specialist nurses for more advice about alcohol.

# Hospital checklist

**If you are staying overnight, here is some guidance on what to bring with you.**

**Due to limited space, please only bring essential items to see you through your stay in hospital. Please bring the following items:**

- ☐ Dressing gown and non-slip slippers
- ☐ Two sets of nightwear
- ☐ Underwear
- ☐ Toiletries and a towel
- ☐ Personal items, such as glasses and books. If you wear spectacles, please bring a case to put them in
- ☐ All of the tablets, medicines and inhalers that you use regularly in their original packaging
- ☐ A small amount of cash for newspapers or other items – do not bring large amounts of cash or unnecessary valuables



# Your operation day

It's best that you have a bath or shower prior to coming into hospital. Please follow instructions on your admission letter as to when to arrive at the hospital, and where you should go.

When you come into hospital for your operation, you'll be seen by members of your medical team and nursing staff. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask at this time.

We want you to feel comfortable asking questions at any point during your stay, and ask about anything you're not clear about.

For some procedures, you may need to be admitted the night before your operation – but we'll tell you in advance if this is the case.





# After your operation

## Pain relief

Good pain relief is important as it will help your body to heal sooner.

With the help of effective pain management, being active after your operation can help prevent complications such as chest infections (pneumonia) and blood clots.

The pain relief you need depends on your operation. While it's normal after surgery to experience some discomfort, we want you to be as comfortable as possible and able to breathe deeply, move and cough.

At your pre-operative assessment, we'll give you information leaflets about the different types of pain relief we might use after your operation. We'll also discuss your pain relief with you before your surgery.

## Remember

Some pain after an operation is expected, but there's lots we can do to help you.

### The staff looking after you will be working hard to:

- keep pain at a level that's acceptable to you
- make you as comfortable as possible.

## Tubes and drips

During and after your operation, you may have a drip put into your arm to rehydrate you and supply your body with nutrients – the tubes will usually be removed one to two days after surgery.

Depending on your surgery, you may also need a urinary catheter, which is a thin, flexible tube inserted into the bladder to drain and collect urine into a drainage bag (simply called a drain).

This is very common after surgery and there is nothing to worry about. If you do have any questions or concerns speak to your nursing staff.

## Deep breathing exercises

When you wake up after your operation, it's important to do some deep breathing exercises. Breathe in deeply through your nose and then let the air gently out of your mouth. Breathe steadily in and out several times, and repeat this exercise at least five times an hour.

## Getting out of bed and exercising

Depending on your surgery, you may be encouraged to get up after your operation the same day.

In fact, it's a good idea to get up and move around after your operation. Walking helps your lungs work better, which reduces your chance of developing a chest infection, as increased amounts of oxygen are carried around your body.

Sitting upright is also a good idea, but if you don't feel well enough, just sitting up in bed is also helpful. Your hospital chair is designed to help you get air into your lungs when you sit in it. Your nursing staff will help you get into your chair, and can advise you on what you should be able to achieve after your operation.

### Preventing complications

After your operation you could be at risk of developing complications. The medical staff may give you special socks to wear, as well as some medication to help prevent blood clots.

You should also wear the stockings after you've gone home – until you're as mobile as you were before your surgery.

### Eating and drinking

After most types of surgery you can try to drink and eat something as soon as you feel well enough. If this is not the case, you'll be told in good time before your surgery.

When you start to drink and eat, it's best to start with water and progress to milky drinks, followed by eating small portions of food. Be sensible in your choice of food and drinks, and how much intake you have throughout the day.

You may need to see a nutritionist after your surgery. Also, after your meals, the nursing staff may need to give you some medicine to help your body digest your food.

If you feel sick, just keep to fluids until you feel more settled. Be sure to let the nurses know if you feel sick so that they can give you some medication to relieve the nausea.



## Recovering well after your operation

### Pain relief

Everyone is different, and how quickly you recover depends upon lots of things. In the first few days after your operation, it's important to push yourself a little bit. Work with the nursing staff to help yourself get moving and eating as quickly as possible – it's all part of a better recovery for you.

### Fluids

Your body needs fluids to help it recover. In hospital you may have a drip to help your body get enough fluids, and once the nurse removes the drip you should try and drink regularly throughout the day.

Your nursing staff can tell you how much you should be drinking during the day. You should set yourself a target with the nurse and try and achieve this every day.

### Top tip

The hospital do provide snacks between meals however if family and friends bring in drinks make sure they avoid fizzy drinks.

## Eating

Straight after surgery, you may not be able to eat for a while, but your nursing staff will let you know when you can, and will support you during meal times if you need help eating.

At first you may be on a drip, which will make sure your body has the right intake of nutrients, but once this is removed you should be able to start eating small meals.

You may also be given oral nutritional supplements, which is a small drink to give you nutrients your body needs to help recover after the operation. Your nurse will be able to help you understand if you need to have these special drinks.

### Top tip

Ask family and friends to bring some healthy snacks with them for you to eat between meal times.

## Sitting up

It's important for you to get up in your bed as soon as possible. Sitting up helps prevent getting chest infections. Aim to sit up in your bed as soon as you wake from your operation.

For some operations, you might find it difficult to sit up in a chair straight away, but try and push yourself to do this as soon as possible.

Your chair is designed to help your lungs get the air they need, which will help you recover from surgery. Your nursing staff can help you into your chair if needed.



## Walking

You may find walking straight after your operation difficult, or you may feel confident enough to get up and walk around the ward straight away. It's important to get up and moving as soon as possible, and listen to the advice and support from your nursing staff.

For most patients, walking a few days after surgery is a realistic target. You should push yourself to get up and about every few hours and try and walk further amounts each time. Your nursing staff can support you if you feel unsteady and need help walking around the ward.

### Top tip

Set yourself a target to walk to each day. This could be walking to the end of the ward, or walking to the bathrooms.

## Exercising

You may have some exercises to do from your nursing staff, which will help your recovery. It's important to listen to their advice and push yourself to do these exercises. They will help you recover sooner and prepare you for when you are discharged home.



# When you're back home

Once you've been discharged home, it's important to continue your recovery programme, as your body still needs time to recover.

## Exercise

Once you're back home, it's a good idea to exercise a few times a day. You can gradually increase your exercise following your surgery, until you return to your normal level of activity.

One important thing is not to attempt any heavy lifting after surgery until your medical team advises you that it is safe. If you plan to restart a routine exercise such as jogging or swimming, wait until you discuss this with the medical team looking after you.

In general, if your operation wound is still uncomfortable, modify your exercise. Once the wounds are pain free you can normally undertake most activities. When you get home, you'll feel extremely tired and will need to sleep during the day. This is normal and will improve over time.



## Work

You should be able to return to work after your operation, but you should take advice from your medical team. If you work in a heavy manual job, then you shouldn't attempt heavy work or lifting for some time after your operation.

## Driving

Don't drive until you're confident that you can drive safely, and you're back to most of your normal activities. We recommend you visit the DVLA website to find out if your health condition and surgery will affect your driving [www.gov.uk/dvla-medical-enquiries](http://www.gov.uk/dvla-medical-enquiries)

You may need to contact your insurance company after your surgery, but the DVLA should be able to advise you on this.

## Hobbies and activities

It's a good idea to try and return to your hobbies and activities as soon as possible after surgery – it will keep you active and help your recovery. You shouldn't need to restrict these unless they cause significant pain or involve heavy lifting, in which case you should avoid these types of activities after your operation.

## Eating

You may not feel able to eat large meals, so continue to eat small portions throughout the day. It's important your body has the right nutrients to help it build strength. Even if you are feeling better your body could still be recovering from your operation, so it's important you continue to eat well.

## Fluids

Try and maintain high volumes of fluids when you return home. Set yourself a daily target and keep this up for several weeks after your surgery.

## Smoking

If you have stopped smoking prior to your operation or whilst you were in hospital, you can receive support now you've returned home from your local stop smoking service.

If you start smoking after surgery this can result in complications. Also if you are on specific medication, smoking can reduce the effectiveness of these.

If you live with a smoker, it's important you ask them to smoke outside or consider a quit attempt, as secondhand smoke can also have a negative impact on your recovery.

## Alcohol

Because your body needs time to recover after surgery, it's best to avoid drinking alcohol when you return home.

### Alcohol advice

Advice on alcohol consumption can be found by visiting [www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk) or by calling 020 7766 9900.

# At home – complications to look out for

It is unlikely that you will suffer from any complications as a result of your surgery, but it's important to know what to look out for and what to do just in case.

Please take the following actions if you notice any of these signs or symptoms:

Signs/symptoms	Take the following action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Bleeding</li><li>● Breathing difficulties</li><li>● Chest pain</li><li>● Fever</li><li>● Racing pulse</li><li>● Vomiting</li></ul>	<p><b>Call 999 if this is an emergency.</b></p> <p><b>Speak to your GP immediately who may refer you back to hospital.</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Redness or swelling around the wound</li><li>● Pain in the calf</li><li>● Pain which is constant and has limited relief from the painkillers you have taken</li></ul>	<p><b>Speak to your GP or district nurse.</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Mild pain</li></ul>	<p>You should be on pain relief once you're discharged. If this isn't working, discuss this with your GP.</p> <p>If this is a new pain, you should arrange to speak to your GP and let them know the details of your pain.</p>

All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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Dhammaan warbixinta bukaanleyda ee Ururka ee la oggol yahay waxaa marka la codsado lagu heli karaa nuskhado kale, sida luqado kale, akhris fudud, far waaweyn, dhegeysi, farta braille ee dadka indhaha la', Moon iyo nidaam eletaroonig ah.

Working together with your healthcare team to make simple changes before and after surgery is part of your 'enhanced recovery.' It's the proven way to get better more quickly.

Ask your team how you can play your part.

Simply,

a better  
recovery