

Advice after removal of your appendix

General Surgery Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

We wish you a speedy recovery after your operation. This leaflet contains some advice you may find useful during your recovery. Everyone recovers differently after surgery. It is quite normal to feel tired and weak for the first few weeks but if this persists, please contact your GP for advice.

Will I be in pain?

You may experience some pain and soreness after your operation. You should therefore take the painkillers given to you when you leave hospital or the pain relief you would normally take at home. Take care to read the instructions on the bottle and take the prescribed amount.

If you are in a lot of pain and your painkillers do not relieve this, please contact your GP for advice.

How do I care for my wound?

As your wound heals, it may feel tingly, numb, itchy or lumpy and may pull slightly around the stitches. This is quite normal and is part of the healing process.

If you have a dressing on your wound when you leave hospital, you can take this off the third day after your operation. If necessary, hospital staff may arrange for a district nurse to check your wound at home.

Once your dressing has been removed, you can shower or bathe as normal. Do not use perfumed products until your wound is completely healed.

Your stitches or clips may either be dissolvable or will need to be removed 10 to 14 days after surgery. If they need to be removed, you will need to make an appointment at your GP surgery to see the practice nurse. The ward nurse will discuss this with you before you leave the ward.

However, if you are unable to visit your practice nurse, hospital staff will arrange for a district nurse to visit you at home on a specified date. When you see the practice nurse or district nurse, please show them the documents you were given when you left hospital. These are known as discharge documents.

What can I eat?

It is a good idea to eat a low fat diet for at least four to six weeks after surgery, as the pain you experienced before surgery can sometimes come back during this period.

After this period, there are no set rules about what you can or cannot eat. You will find out for yourself what your body will tolerate.

Bowel habits

It is quite normal for the bowels not to open for a day or so after the operation. If you have not opened your bowels after two days and you feel uncomfortable, take a mild laxative such as senna.

It is important to try to avoid becoming constipated and therefore eating a high fibre diet including a lot of fruit and vegetables; having plenty of drinks and regular gentle exercise will help. Please remember that some painkillers can also cause constipation. If you become constipated, please ask your GP for advice.

Can I drive?

It is advised that you do not drive until your stitches or clips have been removed, or if your stitches are dissolvable, do not drive for at least two weeks.

Some insurance companies do not insure drivers for a number of weeks after surgery so it is best to check what your policy says before starting to drive.

Do not start driving again until you can do an emergency stop without any discomfort. Do not drive if you have any pain that will distract you.

When can I go back to work?

You should gradually increase your daily activities within your capabilities but should avoid lifting heavy objects for at least six weeks after your operation.

If you have a heavy job, you should not work for at least six weeks after surgery. Otherwise, you can return to work whenever you feel able. If you need a fit note (formerly called a sick note), the nurse give this to you before you leave hospital. This will normally be for two weeks. If you need another one, you can get this from your GP.

What should I look out for?

It is common to get a lot of bruising after surgery. However, if you have a high temperature, a lot of pain or are being sick, this could mean that you have an infection. Seek advice from your GP or the Surgical Assessment Unit (SAU):

SAU on 01384 456111 ext. 3359, ext. 3949 or ext. 2699

Also contact your GP or SAU if you have any other worries concerning your operation.

Follow up

It is not usually necessary for you to see the consultant for a follow up visit unless your consultant specifically requests this. In this case, we will give you an appointment before you leave hospital.

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Surgical Assessment Unit (SAU) on 01384 456111 ext. 3359, ext. 3949 or ext. 2699

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/general-surgery/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email dgft.patient.information@nhs.net

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

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Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

یہ کتابچہ آپ کو بڑے حروف کی لکھائی، سمعی صورت اور دیگر زبانوں میں مہیا کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ براہ مہربانی فون نمبر 08000730510 پر رابطہ کریں۔