Day surgery unit

Information for adults who have had a general anaesthetic

We hope that your stay with us met with your personal needs, expectations and that you received a high standard of care delivered with courtesy and respect for you as an individual.

The information below explains things you should do, and things to avoid, in the early days and weeks when you return home. They are designed to help you recover safely and quickly following your anaesthetic.

Activity
- Only do as much as you feel able to do and gradually increase your activity until you feel back to normal.
- When you get home, try to go to bed and ask your carer/relative to make sure you are not disturbed so you can rest.
- You must have a responsible adult with you constantly for the first 24 hours after your general anaesthetic and also to escort you home.

Eating and drinking
- You may find you are not hungry, this is quite common initially after general anaesthetic. Make sure you drink plenty to flush out the anaesthetic.
- Your appetite should return to normal in a few days.
- If you are hungry you can eat as much as you like.
- You may have a sore throat and dry mouth, drinking iced water helps.

Do not drink alcohol or take sleeping tablets for the first 24 hours after your operation.

Sleep and pain relief
- Some pain is to be expected after an operation but it should not be too severe, discomfort is the main complaint.
- If you find it difficult to rest because of pain or because your movement is restricted, you may find it helpful to take a mild painkiller such as paracetamol before you go to bed.
- You may also be prescribed painkillers depending on the operation you had. These medications are listed below and should be taken according to the instructions on the label as follows:
Bathing and showering

- It is sensible to have someone with you when you bath or shower within the first 24 hours after anaesthetic. You may not need help but can sometimes feel light headed when getting out of the bath.
- If you have a wound you will be advised specifically how to bath or shower according to your operation.

Wound healing

- The wound should be kept dry and covered for........days then remove the dressing.
- Washing and light showers only until dressing removed.
- If your wound has been closed with Dermabond surgical glue, allow the glue to dissolve in five to seven days. Do not rub or soak the site.
- If you have dissolvable stitches no further treatment is needed. They can take up to two weeks to dissolve.
- An infection at the site is unusual but may present with discharge from the wound, redness, swelling and heat, increased pain or an offensive smell. You should seek advice from your ward or GP practice as soon as possible, but certainly within 24 hours of the symptoms developing.

Driving or operating machinery

- You should not drive for 24 hours unless otherwise stated by medical staff as you may still be affected by the anaesthetic. It may also put a strain on your wound when performing certain manoeuvres, especially an emergency stop.
- Your insurance will be void if you have an accident whilst driving against medical advice. A good indication you are ready to drive again is when you can walk upstairs without any pain or discomfort.
- You should not do anything that requires good co-ordination.
- You should not use the kettle or the cooker for the first 24 hours after an anaesthetic.

Work

- You should always take 24 hours off from work after your operation depending on your procedure.
- You may need to take longer off depending on your operation.
- Increase activity gradually until your usual activity level is achieved.
Exercise

- Gentle exercise can help reduce the chance of complications and aid a good recovery following your surgery.
- Deep breathing helps keep your lungs clear after a general anaesthetic.
- To help stimulate your circulation you can do foot and leg exercises:
  - Bend and stretch the ankles
  - Move the ankles around in a circle
  - Pull up the feet from the ankles and press the knees down into the bed, hold then slowly release
- Repeat each exercise 10 times.
- If you have been sent home with support stockings continue to wear them as advised.

Contact Telephone numbers:

- Addenbrooke’s Hospital switchboard: 01223 245151
- Ward L2 Addenbrooke’s Day Surgery Unit: 01223 216545
- Ward J3 Addenbrooke’s Hospital: 01223 349177
- Ely Day Surgery Unit: 01353 652277
- Cambridge Eye Unit: 01223 257168

Specific additional information:

We are currently working towards a smoke-free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS Stop Smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

Help with this leaflet:

If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk