Discharge advice following a hernia repair

Information for patients
Day Surgery Unit
Discharge advice following your hernia repair

Please ensure you have a competent adult with you for the first 24 hours after your surgery.

We would also advise you not to:

- drive a car or ride a bike
- operate machinery
- sign any legal documents
- smoke or drink alcohol
- take sleeping tablets unless prescribed for you.

What should I expect during my recovery?

You will have a dressing over your wound, which needs to be left in place for 24 - 48 hours after your operation. After 48 hours you can remove the dressing and bath and shower as normal taking care to dry your wound fully afterwards. You must not use soaps or other products on the wound as this could affect your healing. Once the wound is clean and dry you do not need it covered.

You may experience some bleeding from the wound site, if this occurs you should apply continuous pressure for about 10 minutes. If it does not stop you can contact the Day Surgery Unit or the out of hours contact number given to you, for advice.

Bruising and swelling may be troublesome, particularly if the hernia was large. The swelling may take 4-6 weeks to settle down.
What should I do if I have any pain?

After your operation, your wound and the surrounding area will be tender for a week or so. You will be given painkillers to take home; it is important these are taken as prescribed. Please read the instructions provided with the tablets to ensure you do not exceed the maximum dose.

You may find it helpful to make a small pad from a rolled up hand towel to support your wound if you need to cough, sneeze, stand up or sit down for the first couple of days.

How should I look after my wound?

After 48 hours, once your wound is clean and dry you do not have to have it covered, but you may find it more comfortable to have a dressing over it for the first few days. You will be sent home with a spare dressing.

Your stitches are usually absorbable and do not need removing.

You will be given a letter for the Practice Nurse at your own GP surgery to have your wound checked the week after your surgery. You will need to make this appointment after you have gone home.

Can I have a bath or shower?

You need to keep your wound dry for the first 48 hours. The dressing on the site of your operation is shower proof. After 48 hours it is ok to get your wound wet.
Is there anything I can do to help my recovery?

- If you have gone home wearing TED stockings, wear them continuously day and night. You may take them off every day for 30 minutes to bath or shower and check your skin, then replace them. Continue to wear them until your mobility is no longer significantly reduced.
- You should not lift anything heavy or take any strenuous exercise for 6 weeks following your operation.
- Try to eat a high fibre diet, such as bran, weetabix and oranges. It is important to avoid constipation and straining.
- There is no strict rule about the time you can resume your normal sex life. As a general guide, some people feel comfortable with gentle activity after about 2 weeks though it may be about 6 weeks before full activity is comfortable.

Is there anything I should look out for when I go home?

You should seek advice from your GP, attend the NHS walk in centre on Broad Lane or contact the NHS helpline on 111 if you develop any of the following symptoms:

- Persistent fever over 38°C (100.4°F)
- Persistent bleeding
- Increased swelling or pain that is not relieved by painkillers

Will I need a follow up appointment?

You do not normally need a follow up appointment at the hospital. If one is required it will be posted out to you.
When can I drive after my operation?

You may drive your vehicle again when your wound feels comfortable. This is usually between 7–10 days after your operation.

You should not start to drive again until your strength and speed of movement are up to dealing with an emergency stop.

It is advisable to check with your own car insurance provider.

When can I go back to work?

Returning to work depends on the nature of your job. If your work involves heavy lifting you should take 6 weeks off. People with more sedentary jobs should take at least 2 weeks off work. If you require a sick note please ask the nurse before going home.

Who should I contact if I have a problem after my operation?

If you have any concerns in the first 24 hours following your surgery please contact the Bev Stokes Day Surgery Unit on 0114 226 6020 between 9.00am and 7.00pm Monday to Friday.

Outside of these hours please contact your GP surgery or the NHS 111 service or the NHS walk in centre on Broad Lane. If you consider it to be an emergency then please attend your nearest Accident and Emergency Department or ring 999.