

# After Your Day Case Surgery

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Information and advice for after a day case surgical procedure under general anaesthetic

## **Patient Information**

After Your Day Case Surgery With General Anaesthetic V1.0  
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## Introduction

This booklet provides answers to some common questions about going home after surgery. There is also information about how to access additional support should you need it.

### A helping hand

Recovering from surgery puts a physical strain on your body. It is important to keep moving to improve your recovery and reduce the risk of complications. But it is also likely you will be more tired than normal. Make sure you get plenty of rest as well as staying active.

This is where some extra help from your friends and family can be very important.

Preparing to go home after surgery can begin even before you come to hospital by making arrangements with your friends and family for support while you recover.



This might include getting help with looking after children, elderly relatives or pets, or help with shopping and cooking after you get home.

## Driving



Anaesthetic drugs remain in the body for up to 48 hours and gradually wear off over this time. After your anaesthetic, while you still have the drugs in your body, it is important that you do not drive a car or any other vehicle, or a bicycle, for 48 hours after your anaesthetic.

If you drive, it is important that you do not return to driving before you are ready.

Strong painkillers can affect your concentration and make you drowsy. You should not drive while you are still taking strong painkillers.



There are two important tests you should do to check that you are ready to drive:

1. Make an emergency stop without pain - sit in the driver's seat while the car is parked and press very firmly on the brake pedal to check
2. Be able to turn freely to look over both shoulders - make sure you can easily see both blind spots

If you have any concerns about your ability to drive you should speak to your GP. If you are still not able to drive 3 months after your operation you should tell the DVLA.



Driver & Vehicle  
Licensing  
Agency



Search: 'DVLA Medical'

**You could be fined up to £1,000 if you do not tell the DVLA about a condition that might affect your ability to drive safely. You could also be prosecuted if you have an accident.**

## The next 24 hours

- Do not be left on your own for the next 24 hours
- Do not operate machinery or appliances, e.g. cooker, kettle
- Do not lock yourself in the bathroom or toilet or make yourself inaccessible to the person looking after you
- Drink plenty of fluids and eat a light diet, avoiding heavy or greasy foods
- Avoid alcohol
- Arrange some time off work and avoid strenuous exercise
- Do not make any important decisions or sign any legal or other important documents.

## Caring for someone who has had a general anaesthetic or sedation

The Royal College of Anaesthetists have provided an excellent resource about caring for someone who has had a general anaesthetic or sedation.



Search: '[RCoA Caring for Someone](#)'

We suggest that you and the person looking after you read this thoroughly.

## Discharge information

### Follow up

A follow up appointment is not always needed. If the doctor has asked to see you again you will receive an appointment letter in the post.

### Pain relief at home - a guide to your painkillers and how to take them

You may have been given more than one type of painkiller to take home with you. This is because each type of painkiller works in a different way to help relieve your pain. The types of painkiller are:

- Paracetamol
- Anti-inflammatory, for example: diclofenac or ibuprofen
- A morphine based painkiller, for example: codeine phosphate or tramadol.

It is safe to take the different painkillers together or at different times of the day.

The following section will help you choose which painkillers to take according to the severity of the pain.

### Mild pain

Take paracetamol regularly as prescribed on the prescription label. Do not take more than 4 times per day. Your team will prescribe an appropriate dose for you according to your body weight.

## **Moderate pain**

Take paracetamol regularly and also anti-inflammatory painkillers as prescribed on the prescription label.

Your doctor may have decided you are not to have an anti-inflammatory painkiller. If this is the case, take your morphine based painkiller once or twice during the day.

You may find that you only need to take the morphine based painkiller once or twice during the day.

## **Severe Pain**

Take all your painkillers on a regular basis as described on the prescription labels. It may be of benefit to take your paracetamol and morphine based ones together and to take the anti-inflammatory ones 2-3 hours later.

The morphine based painkillers may cause constipation. If this happens, drink plenty of fluids and increase your dietary fibre.

## **How long will I need to take my painkillers?**

As healing occurs, you will feel less pain. Once your pain is controlled and is mild, you should only take paracetamol. If your pain remains severe for more than a few days or is not relieved by your painkillers, you should contact your GP.

Never give prescribed tablets to other people as they may not be safe for them to take. Any leftover painkillers should be taken to your local pharmacy for safe disposal.

**Keep all medicines out of reach of children**

## Pregnant and breast-feeding mothers

It is safe to take regular paracetamol for pain control as directed by your doctor. If you need additional painkillers, your doctor will advise you on what medication to take.

## Sources of support

Once you are home from hospital there are several places you can get support or advice if you need it.

### Who can I call?

Depending on what type of surgery you have had, you may be given the details of a patient advice line if you have concerns after your operation. There are lots of other people who can also help you after your surgery:



### GP and NHS 24

For all other concerns not relating to your operation, please contact either your own GP or NHS 24 by phoning 111.

Dial: **111**



### Contact us

If you have any problems overnight tonight or over the next 24 hours such as:

- New, fresh, or increased bleeding
- Pain that is not controlled with the pain killers provided
- Vomiting that prevents you from getting enough fluids
- Difficultly passing urine.

**Please contact: 0131 537 1327**

## More information

More information is available on the NHS Lothian website:



Search: '**Western General Day Case Surgical Unit**'

Other booklets available in this series include:

- 1 Fit for Surgery**
- 2 Having a General Anaesthetic**
- 3 Day of Surgery**
- 4 Getting Going After Surgery**
- 5 Pain Relief After Abdominal Surgery**
- 6 Going Home After Surgery**

## Tell us what you think

We welcome suggestions to improve this leaflet. If you have any comments that you would like to make, please just let us know.

This publication includes text taken from the Horton Day Case Unit, Oxford Radcliffe Hospital, NHS Trust.