



# ST GEORGE'S HOSPITAL

A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE



## Your recovery

### Starts before surgery

The nurses will explain the anticipated journey, or 'pathway' of your care and the things that you can expect at various stages of your admission.

A selection of patient education sheets are provided on your locker that can guide you with your care and recovery by outlining:

- Before & after surgery – what to expect and when
- Pain management – how we will assess you, how to manage pain relief & common concerns
- Drips & drains – intravenous access for medicines and fluids / wound drain advice
- Deep breathing and leg exercises – these can really speed up your recovery and reduce the risk of complications

If you have any other questions please ask the staff at any time so that we can help you to prepare for surgery, recovery and discharge home.

### After surgery

You will be looked after in the recovery unit (PACU) immediately after your surgery until you are awake and comfortable enough to return to the ward. It is common to have some oxygen as you recover.

We will monitor your breathing, pulse and blood pressure regularly after your surgery. The nurses will also check your wound and any drips or drains to make sure that you are safe and recovering as expected.

### What to expect

- It is common to have discomfort – particularly when you move. However, you should be comfortable enough to breathe deeply and get up and about as soon as possible so please tell the nurses if you are sore
- The nurses will let you know if, and when you are able to drink and eat after your surgery (this will depend on the procedure)
- It is common to have a very dry mouth and sometimes an odd taste in your mouth after an anaesthetic (this can last 24 hrs or so)
- It is common to experience difficulty passing urine after surgery – you may have a feeling of fullness and needing to pee. We will monitor this after your surgery to make sure that you are safe, and help to manage this as required
- We will encourage you to change into your own nightwear and clothes as soon as you are able – this helps you to recover and move around more comfortably

### Meals

You will receive a menu each day so that you can order the next day's meals (as applicable).

Any special dietary requirements or requests not discussed prior to admission can be accommodated by speaking with the nurses, or the executive chef if necessary.

Partners may order and pay for an evening meal through the main reception staff (must be ordered before 4pm).

### Visitors / support persons

You are welcome to have a support person of your choice present as required.

Parents are encouraged to stay with their child and a parent is welcome to stay overnight – please talk with the nurses so that we can accommodate you.

Visiting hours are flexible but we recommend short visits only to enable you to rest and recover.

We may ask visitors to leave your room whilst care or procedures are undertaken but will discuss this with you first.

Most wards encourage a patient rest period between 1-3 pm to help your recovery and well being.

### Mobility & activity

It is important to get up and about as much as you are able (depending on your surgery, comfort and energy levels) as this helps to speed up your recovery and reduce the risk of complications:

- DVT (deep vein thrombosis – blood clot) is a possible risk after surgery – you may be provided with some TED stockings or other risk reduction devices IF the clinician requests this
- You will be advised about the requirements for leg exercises, mobility and stocking use at home before you are discharged (leg exercises are illustrated in the education leaflet on your locker)



## Mobility & activity continued

- If you experience chest pain, difficulty breathing or pain, swelling, tenderness or increased warmth in your calf or thigh when you go home you must contact the clinician's rooms, your GP or the emergency department as these symptoms need to be investigated promptly
- Try to balance the amount of activity and rest as you recover. It is common to do a little too much when you feel good, and feel tired the following day. Aim for small 'bites' of activity and rest, gradually building up the intensity or length of time that you are active
- Walking is one of the best forms of activity to help you recover
- It is safe to resume sexual activity as you feel able, though please check with the surgeon if you have had hip, gynaecological or urological surgery
- Return to work advice will be provided by the clinician after your follow-up appointment

## Wounds

It is likely that your wound will be swollen and inflamed for the first week, or more and continue to be sore until the underlying tissues have healed completely. As you recover and do more, it is quite common to experience:

- Unusual sensations such as tingling, numbness or itching
- A hard or lumpy feeling around, and underneath the scar
- A pulling sensation around stitches or clips as the wound heals
- Bruising around the wound
- Scabs forming over the wound – do not pick, or pull at these, they will fall off when ready

It is quite safe to get your wound wet when you shower (unless advised otherwise). Any dressing will air dry and should

be left in place to provide support for your wound as long as possible.

If there is no dressing in place - pat the wound dry gently after you shower.

You will be advised about any specific wound dressings or recommended wound care as you recover.



Wireless internet access may be used at your own risk. St George's Hospital accepts no responsibility for any adverse event (e.g. virus) that may happen whilst using the wireless network.

**Name:** STG-GUEST

**Password:** Key2Wireless

## Your care in hospital

Information provided to us during the course of your treatment and hospital stay is subject to the Privacy Act 1993 and the Health Information Privacy Code.

**All personal information is confidential** and is protected against loss, unlawful access, use, modification, unauthorised disclosure or misuse. Information is only used for the purpose it was collected for, unless otherwise authorised by the individual. We will request consent from you should information be required for research or educational purposes and you have the right to refuse.

**If you have a complaint**, or would like to discuss an issue, please speak to the charge nurse or nursing coordinator.

If you would prefer to address an issue or complain in writing please write to 'The Hospital Manager' at St George's Hospital, or use the feedback section on the St George's Hospital website.

All verbal and written information will be treated promptly and confidentially and you will be informed of the outcome.

**Information about your rights as a consumer** (Health & Disability Code of Rights) and how to access the Health and Disability advocacy service are displayed and available in the ward.

## Quality improvement

We aim to provide a consistently high standard of quality service at St George's and will ask for your feedback. You will be encouraged to complete a patient satisfaction survey following your stay.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this – your feedback helps us to improve our care.

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## Main hospital

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