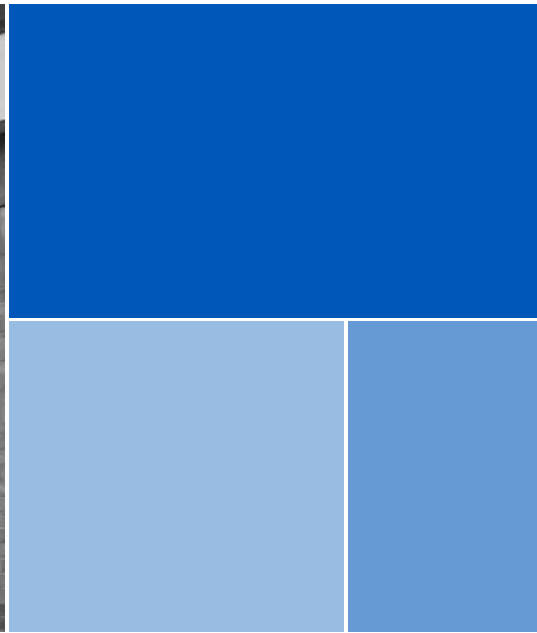


Information for patients following a minor operation



This information sheet is for patients who have had a minor operation. It explains what you can do to prevent any complications and what you should do if you do have any problems.

Care of your wound

Once the doctor has finished your surgical procedure, a small waterproof dressing may be applied.

It is important that you keep this area clean and dry for at least 48 hours. If the dressing remains intact then leave it in place until the stitches are removed as this will prevent the stitches from catching on your clothing.

You may see a small amount of blood on the dressing. This is normal and requires no action to be taken. However if the bleeding continues and the dressing becomes soaked you will need to:

- Apply firm pressure over the dressing with a clean cloth for 15 minutes without looking at the wound.
- If bleeding still continues, apply an ice-pack for 15 minutes to the dressed area. A simple ice-pack can be made by placing a bag of frozen peas into a dry plastic bag and then wrapping this in a clean cloth. This will avoid wetting the dressing.
- If bleeding continues after carrying out these steps you will need to seek medical attention. This can be either by contacting your own GP, attending the Accident & Emergency department at the James Paget University Hospital or contacting the department which undertook your surgical procedure.

Pain following surgery

Pain after the operation is variable but when the local anaesthetic wears off, which is usually between one to four hours, you may experience some soreness or discomfort at the operation site. Those areas which are subject to pressure such as your feet, or a lot of movement such as your shoulder, may be more uncomfortable. For this you can take paracetamol (two tablets can be taken every four to six hours as required with a maximum of eight tablets in 24 hours), which you can buy from your local pharmacist or supermarket. However **do not** take paracetamol if you are already taking another

product containing paracetamol or are allergic to it. When taking medicines it is important that you read and follow the instructions, warnings and dosage on the packet or bottle.

You should avoid taking aspirin or any anti-inflammatory drugs such as Ibuprofen and avoid alcohol for the next few days as these increase the risk of bleeding. **If you are already taking these medications for other medical conditions do not stop taking them without consulting your GP.**

If the wound becomes painful, red and inflamed several days after the initial discomfort has ceased, infection may be present and you should make an appointment to see your GP or practice nurse.

If you are prescribed any antibiotics please ensure that you finish the course.

What to expect

If you have surgery around the eye or forehead there may be bruising which will result in a black eye. If this occurs it requires no treatment and will gradually fade over the next few days. There may be swelling around the wound site, but this is a natural part of the healing process and should also reduce over the first few days following your surgery.

You should relax and take things easy for the first 24 to 48 hours. You should avoid any vigorous exercise or heavy lifting for approximately one week after your stitches have been removed.

You may experience occasional pain as the wound heals, numbness around your wound site for several weeks and some people have altered sensation in the long term.

Scarring after surgery

It is impossible to cut the skin without scarring and so you will be left with some form of scar. For the majority of people the scar will initially be red and raised but it usually reduces in colour and size over time with the overall result of scarring taking a year to fade.

Letters, stitch removal, further appointments

A letter will be faxed through to your GP explaining about the operation.

Unless you have been told otherwise, the nurse at your GP's surgery should remove your stitches. It will be necessary for you to phone and make this appointment yourself. The doctor will inform you of when the stitches will need to be removed. If you have been given steri-strips for the nurse to apply, please ensure this happens as these will help to give your wound extra strength whilst healing.

Washing

After the dressing is removed you may get the wound wet and either shower or take a quick bath. However, do not soak your wound for a prolonged time. Follow the directions given to you by the doctor.

What if I have questions or concerns when I get home?

If you have any questions after your minor operation please contact:

- The department where your procedure was carried out (01493 452299) or
- Your GP



The hospital is able to arrange for an interpreter to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay through INTRAN.

If you need an interpreter or a person to sign, please let us know.

If you require a large print version of this booklet, please contact PALS on
01493 453240