

Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback. If you need advice or are concerned about any aspect of care or treatment please speak to a member of staff or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS):

Freephone: 0800 183 0204

From a mobile or abroad: 0115 924 9924 ext 65412 or 62301

Deaf and hard of hearing: text 07812 270003

E-mail: pals@nuh.nhs.uk

Letter: NUH NHS Trust, c/o PALS, Freepost NEA 14614, Nottingham NG7 1BR

www.nuh.nhs.uk

Your recovery after spinal surgery

Information for patients

Spinal Department

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet please email patientinformation@nuh.nhs.uk or phone 0115 924 9924 ext. 67184.

The Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.

This document can be provided in different languages and formats. For more information please contact:

Spinal Nurse Practitioners office
QMC campus
Derby road, Nottingham.
Tel: 0115 924 9924 ext 89364

On the day of discharge

Our aim is to get you home for lunch on the day of discharge if possible, or move you to the discharge lounge, where you will wait for your medication and your own arrangements for transport home (family, friend, and taxi). Feel free to ask any member of staff any questions you are unsure about.

Emotional Changes

Anaesthesia can alter your mood, this can be normal to feel discourage, tired and unwell for several days after surgery. You may also have nausea and vomiting due to the effect of the anaesthetic. People react differently but try to stay positive for a healthy recovery. Discomfort and pain are expected after surgery until inflammation and nerve sensitivities have subsided.

Pain

Pain and tenderness around the incision area after any surgery is expected and does not mean that your surgery was unsuccessful. When home continue with your pain relief as prescribed. Controlling pain is important as it enables you to recover quicker. If you have any questions about your medication please contact your GP for possible review of your medication.

Medication

If we have started you on new medications you will be given a limited supply to take home. If more is required your GP will supply as needed.

Medication which you brought into hospital will be returned to you if suitable for use. Please make sure you have a supply of your regular medication from your GP ready for you to go home to.

Notes

Nurse practitioners' contact numbers

- Teresa Hill-Daykin: 0781 227 0059
- Marie Donaldson: 0781 227 0053
- Joysy Jason: 0781 226 8257
- Nicola Marsh: 0781 226 9112
- Sarah Dillon: 0781 226 8224
- Ann Marriott: 0781 226 8808

Wound care

After discharge follow the instruction given to you on the ward or on the discharge letter. This may require change of dressing, removal of sutures, staples and drainage bags. A Practice Nurse may be required to oversee this, arrange through your GP. Abnormal symptoms to look out for on wound infection are as follows:

- Fever
- Increase in redness
- Oozing from the wound
- Increase in pain that does not respond to your medication
- Swelling around the wound

If you experience any of the above do not delay in contacting your GP or your named nurse practitioner.

Always keep your wound clean and dry. You can have a shower but do not have a bath till the wound is healed. If you need to change your dressing, ensure hands are clean to prevent wound infection.

Collar and brace

You may need to wear these for up to six weeks to twelve weeks depending on the type of surgery you have had and instruction from your consultant. Please ask your named spinal nurse practitioner for advice.

Anti-embolic stockings

Please refer to your leaflet in you information back (helping prevent blood clots in hospital) we advise spinal patients to wear their Ted stockings up to six weeks after surgery, more so at night as you should be mobile during the day.

Getting back to normal after spinal surgery

You can stop using your walking aids as soon as you are confident and comfortable without them (unless you are instructed differently by the physiotherapist). Exercises will be given to you on discharge by the physiotherapist. It is important that you follow it routinely as to enhance your recovery. At times you may require physiotherapy appointment and your referral will be followed. Remember your BLT restrictions (bending, lifting and twisting) following surgery. Resist sitting for long periods of time. We encourage early mobility as this helps with circulation, healing and recovery.

If we think you need help at home with our support services (occupational therapist), arrangements will be made before your discharge and your GP will be informed.

Hygiene and bath

It is important to maintain good hygiene. Do not soak the incision site for the first six weeks so avoid baths and swimming until the wound is healed. The incision site may itch but do not scratch or scrub the area.

Driving

This will be reviewed at your six to eight weeks appointment.

Returning to work

This will depend on your type of surgery and the type of work you do.

Most patients go back to work six to eight weeks after surgery or though may vary from patient to patient. Please speak to your named nurse practitioner for advice.

Diet

A healthy balanced diet is essential to recovery and healing. We advise a good intake of fluid, fruit and vegetables which will help to avoid constipation. Constipation is a common side effect from narcotic pain medications also with lack of adequate post-operative mobility.

Healing and smoking

Healing is a natural process of restoring damaged tissues and does take time. It requires a gradual and persistent effort to increase your physical strengths. It is expected to still have good and bad days but over time the good days should become more. This hospital is a non-smoking hospital so we advise against both pre and post-operative smoking because smoking delays skin and healing. It interferes with effectiveness of some pain medications. If you need help with smoking cessation, we can refer you to New Leaf or you can contact them yourself or contact your GP.

Sex life

Sexual relations may be resumed during the recovery period and we advise that this activity should be limited in the first few weeks post-surgery. Passive activity and gradually increase as you feel more comfortable. If you have metal work inserted, it is advisable to avoid full activity in the first few months and increase as you feel more comfortable.

Outpatient appointments

You will be sent an appointment for 6-8 weeks after surgery, depending on the type of surgery this could be either a telephone consultation or a face to face with an x-ray in spinal outpatients.