

Safer surgery – what you need to know

A guide for patients



This leaflet provides information on our surgical safety checks and explains what is involved.

Surgical safety checks

When you are a patient in our hospital we want to ensure that your surgery and stay with us is as safe as possible. At Guy's and St Thomas' we use a safety checklist for all our operations and some other procedures.

The Surgical Safety Checklist was developed by the World Health Organization and has been adapted for our use. There is evidence that using the checklist prevents over 30% of the potential mistakes during surgeries, keeping the risk of harm to a minimum.

What is involved in the checklist?

The Surgical Safety Checklist is a series of questions for the surgical team (doctors, nurses and anaesthetists) to ask at three different stages:

- With you, before you have your anaesthetic
- Within the team before the surgeon begins your procedure
- Before you leave the operating theatre

[illegible]

The questions encourage better communication and teamwork in the theatre, and are a final check of essential information such as your name, allergies and site of operation.

Why do I need to know about the Surgical Safety Checklist?

The checklist is used to make your surgery safer. We hope that knowing about the checklist will make you feel comfortable when the surgical team discuss it in the operating theatre, before you are given your anaesthetic.

You may be asked the same questions more than once and we appreciate this can be frustrating. Please be aware that this is to ensure the highest levels of safety when your care transfers from one team to another. We want to ensure safe teamwork, with all the equipment and information that may be needed available from the beginning to the end of your operation.

How can I help the surgical team?

Good communication between patients, families and the surgical team is important for safe care and we value your involvement.

For your safety, staff working in the operating theatre will ask you to say your name, date of birth, if you have any allergies. They may also ask you some additional questions. If you are concerned about anything or do not understand what is being said, you can speak to any member of the team.

Further support

Language support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints)

e: complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Leaflet number: 4163/VER1

Date published: October 2015

Review date: October 2017

© 2015 Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust