

Oesophagogastric enhanced recovery programme

Your role in recovering after
surgery

Contents

- 3 The enhanced recovery programme: What is it?**
- 3 What can I do before my operation?**
- 4 What can I do on the day of my surgery?**
- 4 What is my role after my surgery?**
- 5 When will I be discharged from hospital?**
- 6 Improving our service**
- 7 Contact us**
- 8 Further information**

The enhanced recovery programme: What is it?

This booklet explains what the enhanced recovery programme is and how you can play an active part in recovering from your surgery. It does not explain the operation you are having (for example, oesophagectomy or gastrectomy), as you will have already been given detailed information about this. If you are not sure about anything, please ask – we are here to help. It is important that you understand so that you and your family and friends can take an active role in your recovery.

The programme uses a plan of the best care to help you recover from your surgery of the oesophagus and/or stomach. It aims to:

- prepare you for your surgery
- reduce complications after your surgery
- help you leave hospital sooner
- return back to normal life sooner.

What can I do before my operation?

Before your operation there are healthy steps that you can take that will help you recover after your surgery. You can:

- lead an active life
- eat as well as possible, preventing any weight loss
- cut down or stop smoking
- cut down or reduce the amount of alcohol you drink
- relax and try not to worry about your operation
- arrange support for after your surgery (someone who can help you with heavy shopping or housework, for example)

- make plans for your transport to and from the hospital
- make sure you have a supply of your usual medications to bring into hospital with you.

What can I do on the day of my surgery?

We know this a stressful time for you, but try to relax. If you have any questions, or if you're not sure about anything, please ask us.

You will be given instructions about fasting before your surgery. Unless you have been told otherwise, you should not eat or drink anything (except water) for six hours before your operation (you can drink water up to two hours before the operation).

On the morning of your surgery you will be given two cartons of drink called 'PreOp'. This is taken two to three hours before the surgery. This is a carbohydrate drink that will give your body energy, and has been proven to reduce the stress of the operation on your body.

What is my role after my surgery?

Following your surgery we need you to actively participate in your care.

- Report any sickness or vomiting – we can give you medicine to help.
- Report any pain – we want you to be comfortable and able to move without pain.
- Follow instructions from the hospital staff.
- Complete your exercises (see page 5) – these are proven to prevent complications.

- Try to do a bit more every day – sit in a chair for longer and walk further with the nurse or physiotherapist.
- Ask questions about anything you are not sure about. You can either ask the nurse looking after you or ask for the enhanced recovery nurse.

Your exercises:

Breathing exercises will lower your risk of developing a chest infection after your surgery.

To perform the exercise:

1. Sit up and support your abdomen (tummy) with a rolled up towel.
2. Breathe in deeply through your nose and slowly out through your mouth.
3. Do this three times. Repeat the exercise every hour after your surgery.

Leg exercises will lower your risk of developing blood clots in your legs after your surgery. These are exercises to help your body's circulation.

To perform the exercise:

1. Point your feet up and then down.
2. Move your ankles in a circular motion.
3. Repeat both actions at least 10 times every hour after your surgery.

When will I be discharged (sent home) from hospital?

We can discharge you from hospital once:

- you can walk around on your own

- you are eating and drinking
- your pain is controlled.

On the day of your discharge, you will be given a supply of medications and it will be explained to you when you should take them. You should also be given details of who to contact if you have any problems.

Please arrange for someone to collect you from hospital, either in a car or a taxi. We do not recommend that you go home on public transport after your surgery.

The enhanced recovery nurse will telephone you within the first few days of you leaving hospital. If there are any problems or the nurse is concerned about you, we may ask you to come back to hospital so that we can make sure that you are ok. In all other cases, you will see your cancer or enhanced recovery specialist nurse two weeks after you are discharged from hospital from hospital.

Improving our service

We need to collect data from this programme to look at ways to improve our service. All the data we collect will be anonymous. If you do not wish to be included or would like more information, please speak to the nurse at your pre-assessment appointment.

If at any point you have any question or concerns please do not hesitate to ask the nurse looking after you, the ward sister or the enhanced recovery nurse.

We will ask you to complete a survey after your hospital stay with us. Please give us your honest opinion as we

are always looking for ways to improve the care we give to our patients.

Contact us

If you have any questions about your recovery or surgery, please contact:

- **Enhanced recovery nurse** (Julie Smith) on 0207 188 2673 (answer phone service). Alternatively, call 020 7188 3026, and dial 1260 when prompted.
- **Oesophagogastric cancer nurse specialist** (Joanna Taylor) on 020 7188 2673.
- **POPS (Proactive care of the Older Person undergoing Surgery) Specialist Nurse** (Jason Cross) on 020 7188 2092.
- **Overnight intensive recovery (OIR) department** on 020 7188 5617.
- **Page Ward** on 020 7188 867.
- **Page high dependency unit (HDU)** on 020 7188 4713.
- **Northumberland ward** on 020 7188 8866
- **Nightingale ward** on 020 7188 8865
- **Pharmacy medicines helpline** on 020 7188 8748

All specialist nurses are generally available Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm. Outside of these working hours, please call the ward or your own GP. If you wish to speak to your surgeon, please contact his/her secretary on the number you have already been given.

Further information

The Oesophageal Patients Association is a charity that offers advice and support for oesophageal and gastric cancers. **t:** 0121 704 9860 **w:** www.opa.org.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

Language and Accessible 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



Dimbleby Cancer Care provides cancer support services for Guy's and St Thomas'. We have a drop-in information area staffed by specialist nurses and offer complementary therapies, psychological support and benefits advice for patients and carers.

Dimbleby Cancer Care is located in the Welcome Village of the Cancer Centre at Guy's. **t:** 020 7188 5918
e: DimblebyCancerCare@gstt.nhs.uk

Leaflet number: 3853/VER2

Date published: January 2017

Review date: January 2018

© 2017 Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust