

# Recovering after your haemorrhoid operation

We hope you find the information contained in this leaflet helpful in the days and weeks after your operation. It contains the answers to some frequently asked questions following a haemorrhoidectomy.

## Leaving hospital

If your surgery is in the Day Surgery Unit (DSU), you will be able to go home on the same day. It is important to rest for the remainder of the day to recover from the anaesthetic. You should have someone to help you home and stay with you for at least 24 hours after your surgery.

## Will there be any bleeding?

You should expect some bleeding from your back passage following your operation; this is quite normal. The amount of blood should be less than an eggcup full per day. Over the course of several days the bleeding will become less, although you may have minor bleeding or spotting for up to six to eight weeks. If you think there is a lot of bleeding or the bleeding lasts longer than this, please don't hesitate to contact us.

## Will I be in pain?

This operation can be quite painful for the first couple of days and it may seem like it gets worse before it starts to feel more comfortable again, but the pain will ease. We will give you painkillers before you leave to help with this, as well as some antibiotics, laxatives and possibly some creams to use on your bottom.

## What should I expect when I go to the toilet?

It is important to keep your stool soft, to make sure your tender back passage is not damaged and to reduce your pain. Therefore, we give you a laxative, called Lactulose. You should take 20ml of this twice a day for two weeks after your operation. This should make your stools loose, preventing you from straining and therefore reducing your pain.

There will be a dressing inside your bottom, which will come out when you open your bowels for the first time after your operation. You may also notice a mucous (slimy) discharge from the back passage for up to six weeks; this is perfectly normal. You may wish to wear a pad to protect your underwear.

Following this surgery some men experience difficulty passing urine. It may help to sit and relax in a warm bath and try to pass urine in the bath. If you are still unable to pass urine, please contact your nearest accident and emergency (A&E) department.

## Can I wash as normal?

It is important to keep the area of the operation clean. We recommend that you gently bathe the area in a warm bath. This may also help with your pain. **Do not use soap or put salt in the water** until your wound has healed. Using alcohol-free wet wipes after a bowel movement will also help to keep the area clean and more comfortable.

## Can I drink alcohol after my operation?

You must not drink any alcohol while you are taking the antibiotics, called Metronidazole (Flagyl) that we give you. These antibiotics are important as they prevent infection around your back passage and help to reduce your pain. They can cause an unpleasant reaction when mixed with alcohol, such as nausea, vomiting and severe abdominal pain. You can safely drink alcohol again once you have finished the course of antibiotics.

## When can I return to work?

This is up to you, although we would recommend a week to 10 days off. Most people take about two weeks off work, but this depends on how you feel. You should avoid any strenuous activity such as lifting, exercise or running during the first week or so. Build up to your normal level of activity gradually. You should not go swimming until your wound has healed. However, you can have sex as soon as you feel comfortable.

## Will I have a follow-up appointment?

You will receive a follow-up appointment for about eight weeks after your surgery. This is just a check-up to make sure everything has healed. If you have not heard about this appointment please call the **clinic clerks on 020 7188 6208**.

## Will my haemorrhoids come back?

Haemorrhoids can return. However the chances of this happening can be reduced by taking a number of simple steps.

- Make sure you keep your stool soft to prevent you from straining. You can do this by having a healthy diet, with lots of high-fibre foods. For example, eat more cereals such as muesli, brown rice/pasta, prunes and other fruit and vegetables. Aim to have five portions of fruit and vegetables each day.
- Try to drink lots of fluids, about three litres each day. This will help to make your stool larger so they will be easier to pass.
- Don't sit on the toilet for too long and try not to strain when passing stool. Go to the toilet when you feel the urge to pass stool – don't put it off because you are busy.
- If you become pregnant, take special care not to become constipated.

**We look forward to seeing you in the follow-up clinic.**

## Contact us

If you would like more advice or information after your haemorrhoid operation, please contact the colorectal nurse specialist on **020 7188 2568** Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

### Pharmacy medicines helpline

For information about any medicines that you have been prescribed at Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals, you can speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

**t:** 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

**t:** 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas'    **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's    **e:** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

### Knowledge & Information Centre (KIC)

For more information about health conditions, support groups and local services, or to search the internet and send emails, please visit the KIC on the Ground Floor, North Wing, St Thomas' Hospital.

**t:** 020 7188 3416

### Language support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

**t:** 020 7188 8815    **fax:** 020 7188 5953

### NHS Direct

Offers health information and advice from specially trained nurses over the phone 24 hours a day.

**t:** 0845 4647    **w:** [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

### NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

**w:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### Become a member of your local hospitals, and help shape our future

Membership is free and it is completely up to you how much you get involved. To become a member of our Foundation Trust, you need to be 18 years of age or over, live in Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham, Wandsworth or Westminster or have been a patient at either hospital in the last five years. To join:

**t:** 0848 143 4017    **e:** [members@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:members@gstt.nhs.uk)    **w:** [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk)

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