

# Surgical Admissions Lounges (SAL) and Day Surgery Units (DSU)

**This booklet contains information to help you prepare for your visit to Guy's and St Thomas' adult operating theatres and make your stay as comfortable and safe as possible.**

## **What are Surgical Admissions Lounges (SAL) and Day Surgery Units (DSU)?**

SAL and DSU are pre-operative waiting areas where patients can be admitted on the day of their surgery.

## **Why will I be admitted to SAL or DSU and not a ward?**

Most wards have doctors' rounds in the mornings, where existing patients ready to be discharged (leave hospital) are identified. Once the patients are discharged, the beds are prepared for new patients having surgery.

SAL and DSU allow you to be admitted and prepared for your surgery without waiting for a bed to be available. Having units like SAL and DSU means that you can stay at home the night before your surgery.

**Whether you expect to go home on the same day as your procedure (you have a day case procedure) or expect to stay in hospital longer, you may start your stay at either SAL or DSU.**

Your doctor or specialist nurse in clinic should have indicated the likely length of hospital stay after your surgery but this may change a little as recovery will vary between individuals.

Your admission letter will give the name and contact details of the DSU or SAL where you will start your hospital stay.

## What do I need to do when I receive my admission letter?

- When you receive your admissions letter, check your appointment details. Make a note of the date and time to come to hospital.
- Remember, the recovery time needed following your procedure will affect when you can resume normal activities/return to work.
- Please consider this and if you realise you cannot have your procedure on the date given, please call the telephone number given in your letter. We can then give this appointment to someone else and arrange for your procedure to take place on a different date.

## What do I need to do before coming to hospital?

We may contact you before the day of surgery to check that you are still fit and able to attend.

We will ask if you have had any of the following in the three days running up to your admission date:

- exposure to an infection such as chicken pox, measles, mumps or rubella
- any other illness, including diarrhoea and/or vomiting, a cough or cold.

If you have not been contacted but have had, or been exposed to, any of these illnesses, please contact the number on your admission letter to discuss your situation.

## What do I need to do on the day of my procedure?

### Preparing for an anaesthetic

Please follow the fasting instructions in the **Having an anaesthetic** leaflet provided to you.

**If you have not received any fasting instructions, please call the telephone number on your admission letter.**

### What to bring to the hospital

Please bring with you:

- any tablets, medicines, patches or inhalers that you are currently taking including natural/homeopathic remedies
- spectacles/contact lenses and case
- dentures and pots (as you will need to remove any false teeth)
- slippers and a dressing gown if you have them
- reading material if you wish as you may be waiting for some time before your procedure.

**You are limited to one small bag of essentials. If you bring extra, we may not be able to store it for you as we have very limited storage space.**

### Travel and transport

Information about travelling to Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals is given on the website [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/travel](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/travel).

Information is also given in the booklets **Preparing for your stay at Guy's Hospital** and **Preparing for your stay at Thomas' Hospital**. If you would like one of these booklets and have not received one, please ask a member of staff for a copy.

## Consent - asking for your consent

We want to involve you in decisions about your care and treatment. If you decide to go ahead, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This states that you agree to have the treatment and you understand what it involves. If you would like more information about our consent process, please speak to a member of staff caring for you.

## How long will I spend in SAL or DSU?

Your admission letter will tell you what time to arrive at either SAL or DSU. **Please note that the time given is not the time you will have your procedure**, but allows for you to be admitted, to speak with the surgeon and anaesthetist and ensures that you are safely prepared for your procedure.

**The order of the operating list is not confirmed until the day of admission** so you could be waiting for some hours before your procedure. The nursing staff will keep you informed of how long you are likely to wait, but it is advisable to bring something to help pass the time such as a book, magazine or puzzles.

### Day case patients only

You need to allow time for the procedure and your recovery so you should expect to spend most of the day with us before being safely discharged home.

After your operation, once you are awake and alert, you will be taken to the lounge area where you will be able to relax and have some light refreshments before making the journey home. We have a limited range of refreshment options so if you require something specific, please bring it with you. The nursing staff will advise you when it is safe for you to leave.

If you have had a local anaesthetic, you will be taken back to the lounge area straight after your procedure. You will be offered some refreshments before making your way home. If you have had general anaesthetic or sedation, see page 4 for further information.

### Overnight or longer stay patients only

You may not be allocated a destination ward (the ward where you will spend the rest of your stay) until after you have gone to the operating theatre. Your family member(s) or carer(s) will also be provided with ward contact details once you have been allocated a bed.

Once you are fully recovered you will be transferred to your ward on a bed or trolley for continuing care.

## Will my friends or family be able to come to SAL or DSU with me?

We have very limited waiting space in the departments and therefore only one friend or relative may stay with you. At busier times, they may be asked to wait elsewhere in the hospital.

**Children are strictly prohibited in the departments.**

Unfortunately, there is **no waiting area in the DSU at St Thomas'**. Escorts and visitors will not be able to wait in the department, and will be contacted once you are ready to go home. They may wish to wait in other areas of the hospital, the local area or to wait at home.

If you have special requirements, please discuss with the nurse in charge.

## Can I eat and drink in SAL or DSU?

There is no food or drink allowed in the pre-surgery areas, but there are central refreshment and waiting areas at both Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals. Staff will be happy to direct your relatives and friends to these facilities.

## What will happen to my property?

There are small lockers for patients who are having a day case procedure and going home on the same day.

If you are staying in hospital, your bag will be labelled and transferred to your destination ward.

Please do not bring valuables, such as jewellery, large sums of money, credit cards or mobile phones with you. If this is unavoidable, please ask your relative/friend to look after them for you. **There are no facilities to store valuables.**

## Privacy and single-sex accommodation

All units have single-sex accommodation as well as communal waiting areas. If you are in a communal waiting area and would prefer to be in a single-sex area, please ask a nurse who will direct you to these.

For your own comfort we recommend that you bring your own slippers and dressing gown with you to wear over the top of your theatre gown while you are waiting.

There are curtained and cubicle areas but if you would like to discuss your care or treatment in a more private place please ask a member of staff who will aim to accommodate your request.

## Recovering after general anaesthetic or sedation

Following your surgery, if you have had a general anaesthetic or sedation, you will be taken to the recovery area, where staff will monitor your vital signs to ensure that you are fully awake after your anaesthetic and that any pain is controlled. The recovery period varies between individuals, but is usually between one and four hours. Please note that there is **no visiting in the recovery area**.

You may feel drowsy, and/or nauseous and, depending on the type of procedure you have had, you may feel a little sore around the site of your operation.

Your throat may feel a little dry and you may have a mild sore throat (as a tube will be put into your throat to help you breathe while you are asleep).

### **For 48 hours after surgery do not:**

- drive a car or ride a bike
- operate machinery
- cook, use sharp utensils or pour hot liquids
- drink alcohol
- smoke
- take sleeping tablets
- make important decisions or sign contracts.

## Carers and escorts for day case patients

If you have had a local anaesthetic without sedation, a nurse will advise you if someone should escort you home.

If you are having a general anaesthetic, regional anaesthetic or a local anaesthetic with sedation and are leaving hospital the same day, we will ask you before surgery to provide contact details of a responsible person who can escort you home by taxi or car and ensure that you are safe overnight. You will also need to arrange childcare for your children.

Please ask your escort to contact the day surgery unit to check the time you will be ready to be picked up. They should phone after 11.30am if you have a morning appointment, or after 3.30pm if you have an afternoon appointment. Nursing staff will telephone your escort earlier if you are able to go home before those times.

The type of care you need depends on you and the surgery you have had. It is very important that your carer understands the commitment they need to give to you to ensure your safety at home. If you do not have a carer available on the day of your surgery, your procedure may be cancelled.

Please ensure that your carer understands their responsibilities are to:

- escort you home by car or taxi (not public transport)
- stay with you for 24 hours in your home or their home
- help with household activities such as cooking
- offer plenty of fluids to drink (not alcohol)
- help you with washing and dressing if needed
- call for help, if you have any problems after you procedure

## Medicines

If you are prescribed any medicines to take home, we will give you an initial supply (usually three to seven days) and information about how and when to take them.

If we expect that you need to continue treatment for longer, we will advise you to contact your GP to arrange a new prescription.

## Further information

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets)

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your visit to the DSU or SAL contact

Day Surgery Unit at Guy's Hospital

t: 020 7188 1728, (7.30am to 7pm, Monday to Friday)

Day Surgery Unit at St Thomas' Hospital

t: 020 7188 3222, (7.30am to 8pm, Monday to Friday)

Surgical Admissions Lounge at Guy's Hospital

t: 0207188 9735 (7 am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Surgical Admissions Lounge at St Thomas' Hospital

t: 020 7188 0834 (7 am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

## Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

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

## 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](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) e: [complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto: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](mailto:languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk)

## NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

## 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)

## Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, and to become a member:

t: 0800 731 0319 e: [members@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:members@gstt.nhs.uk) w: [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership)

**Leaflet number: 3836/VER2**

Date published: April 2017

Review date: April 2020

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