Your day surgery under local anaesthetic
– A guide for patients

If you are unable to keep your appointment, please telephone the Day Surgery Unit on 020 7188 1728 at Guy’s or 020 7188 3222 at St Thomas’, as soon as possible, so we can rebook your appointment and give your original appointment to someone else.

Important: Please read the whole of this leaflet carefully.

What is day surgery?

Day surgery allows you to be admitted to hospital for surgery or a procedure and be discharged home on the same day. It is for people who do not need to stay in hospital overnight.

Advancements in surgical and anaesthetic technology mean a range of surgeries can be safely performed as a day case. This makes the surgery more convenient for you.

Not all patients are suitable for day surgery. Your physical health and home circumstances will be assessed by a nurse before your surgery, to determine if day surgery is the best option for you.
Where is the Day Surgery Unit?

We have two Day Surgery Units:

St Thomas’ Hospital Day Surgery Unit,
Ground Floor, Lambeth Wing
t: 020 7188 3222

Guy’s Hospital Day Surgery Unit,
2nd Floor, Thomas Guy House
t: 020 7188 1728.

Please make sure you know which hospital to go to. If you are not sure, please phone one of the numbers above and a member of staff will help you.

What is a local anaesthetic?

A local anaesthetic is medication that is used to ‘freeze’ a specific area of your body, so it is pain free. It can be used by itself, so you remain awake during the surgery, or with sedation, which is medication that can relax you and make you feel sleepy.

A specially trained, medical doctor, called an anaesthetist, will stay with you and monitor your care during this time. You might find the leaflet, Having an anaesthetic, helpful. Please ask your doctor or nurse for a copy.

What do I need to do before my surgery?

It is important that you follow these instructions. If you do not, we may have to cancel your surgery.

1. On the morning of your procedure, please have a light breakfast, such as tea and toast, even if you do not normally do so. If your appointment is in the afternoon, please have a light lunch, such as a sandwich and soft drink, before you arrive. You might feel faint or sick after your surgery if you do not eat or drink as instructed.

2. Please bring all of your medications, including prescription medications, medication you have bought or alternative medications, such as herbal remedies, so we can make sure we know what you are taking. Unless your doctor or nurse tells you otherwise, please take your tablets as prescribed, with a small sip of water, on the day of your surgery. Please make sure you tell us if you have any allergies to medicines.

3. Please arrange for a responsible adult to be available over the phone, in the event that you need someone to take you home after your surgery.

4. Please arrange for a responsible adult to stay with you, if you will not be able to move around easily after the surgery. This should be for as long as the local anaesthetic is affecting your ability to carry out your usual everyday life activities.

5. For the first 24 hours after your surgery, please arrange to stay where you will have access to a telephone in case you are worried and need to contact us for advice.
6. Please have a bath or shower the morning of your surgery, to make sure the skin around the surgical site is clean. This reduces the risk of infection.

7. Please remove all make-up, nail varnish and skin lotions, so we can monitor your skin colour and oxygen levels during the procedure.

8. Please remove your jewellery for safekeeping. If you have jewellery that cannot be removed, please tell us so we can put tape on them before the surgery. This is so they do not interfere with our equipment.

9. Please arrange to have some of your usual pain medication at home, if you plan to use them instead of the pain medication the surgeon will normally prescribe.

10. Please arrange for a responsible adult to drive you home or accompany you in a taxi. We do not recommend public transport because it is not safe if you feel unwell. If you are travelling home alone, please use a taxi.

   **You must have a responsible adult to take you home and stay with you for 24 hours if you have had sedation.**
Checklist

Please bring with you:

- all of the medicines that you are currently taking or using with you when you come to hospital, including those you get from your doctor on prescription, medicines you have bought yourself over the counter, and any alternative medicines, such as herbal remedies. As well as oral medicines (e.g. tablets, capsules, liquids), please bring any inhalers, sprays, patches, creams/ointments, eye/ear/nose drops, or injections that you use. If you need to bring any record cards we will tell you this at the preassessment clinic

- a list of any medicines you are allergic to

- a dressing gown and slippers

- a book or magazines – the time you are asked to arrive in the Day Surgery Unit is not the time your surgery will start. We do our best to run on time but sometimes, unexpected delays do occur. We will keep you informed of the waiting time

- your glasses – contact lenses can damage the eye if left in during the procedure

- your mobile phone, if you need it to contact your family or friends – it must be turned off when you are in the hospital

- your GP’s name, address and postcode if you have moved to a new GP practice since making your appointment

- comfortable clothes that are loose and easy to put on and remove so they will not cause any pressure to your wound site and bandages

- any mobility aids you use, such as a walking stick or walking frame

- a sanitary towel – if you are having a gynaecological procedure.

Please do not bring:

- any valuables, as they might get lost or mislaid

- large bags or suitcases, as storage space is limited.
What will happen when I arrive at the hospital?

For details of where the Day Surgery Unit is, please refer to your admission letter. When you arrive at the Day Surgery Unit, please give your name to the receptionist. You will be asked to take a seat in the reception area until we are ready to prepare you for surgery.

A nurse will take your blood pressure and pulse and make sure you are ready for the surgery. You will be given a gown to change into. The surgeon will also see you before your surgery.

The waiting area is not a single sex area. Please bring a dressing gown that you feel comfortable in. Whenever possible, we will allow a friend or relative to stay with you, but seating can be limited on busy days and this might not always be possible.

Every effort is made to keep waiting to a minimum. However, it is not always possible to predict how long each individual procedure will take. Please speak to the nurses if you are concerned about your waiting time.

You will be collected by a member of the day surgery staff and taken to the operating theatre when it is time for your surgery.

What will happen during the surgery?

Each individual surgery is different and the surgeon will explain to you what will happen during your surgery, before you sign a consent form. A consent form confirms that you agree to go ahead with the surgery. For more information about consent, please ask your doctor or nurse for the leaflet Helping you decide – our consent policy.

A team of highly trained doctors and nurses will be with you and monitor your care throughout the surgery and in the recovery room.

What will happen after the surgery?

Following your surgery, you will be taken to a sitting room and given something to eat and drink. If you need special monitoring after the procedure, you might be taken to the recovery room.

Immediately after your surgery, your discomfort should be minimal. As the local anaesthetic wears off, you will need to take pain medication to reduce any discomfort.

If you experience any pain or discomfort, please tell your nurse so you can be given medication to relieve it.

You will have your blood pressure and pulse monitored regularly. The doctors and nurses will monitor your recovery and make sure it is safe for you to go home.

The surgeon will talk to you about your surgery before you go home. If you have had sedation, you might not remember this conversation.
You will be given a written summary of the procedure and if needed, an outpatient appointment will be given to you or sent in the post.

A letter will be sent to your GP so he or she is aware of the surgery and any follow up care that is needed.

**When can I go home?**

The amount of time that you will spend in the Unit varies according to the surgery you have had and the medication you have been given. This might be up to 2 hours after your procedure. If you need a responsible adult to accompany you home, you will be advised to stay in the Unit until he or she arrives to collect you.

We will explain any medication that we prescribe for you. You will receive written information about this medication before you go home.

We advise that you take pain medication as prescribed, for the first two or three days, even if you feel comfortable. This will help to maintain your comfort. Do not take different kinds of pain medication unless your doctor has advised you to do so and do not take more than the maximum recommended dose.

We will talk to you about your care at home and give you written instructions. Please feel free to ask any questions.

You will be able to leave the Unit when your nurse is satisfied that you are well enough to go home and there is a responsible adult to accompany you, if needed. If you have any concerns about going home, please talk to the pre-operative assessment nurse.

**After your local anaesthetic**

It is important that you follow the advice given below.

Please rest at home until the local anaesthetic has worn off and you have full strength, feeling, reflexes and movement.

Do not go to work or school on the day after your surgery. Please talk to your surgeon about when you should return to work or school.

Keep your wound clean and dry until your stitches are removed. If you have stitches, we will explain this to you and give you information on the care of them and when they need to be removed. You will need to make an appointment to see the practice nurse at your GP surgery to have the stitches removed.

Until the anaesthetic has fully worn off, please do not expose the affected area to heat or extreme cold as you will not be sensitive to them and could damage your skin.

**If you have had surgery on your hands, arms, feet or legs:**

- do not drive any vehicle, including a bicycle, until the full effect of the anaesthetic has worn off.
If you have had surgery on your upper limb (hand, arm, shoulder), you might not be able to control your movement or the amount of pressure you apply and could injure yourself. Please do not:

- attempt to cook, use sharp utensils or pour hot or boiling liquids
- attempt to lift, carry or support anything with the affected limb, until the effects of the local anaesthetic have worn off.

If you have had sedation, your reasoning, reflexes, judgement, coordination and skill can be affected. For 24 hours after the surgery, please do not:

- stay alone – a responsible adult must stay with you during this time
- drive any vehicle, including a bicycle
- operate any machinery
- attempt to cook, use sharp utensils or pour hot or boiling liquids
- drink alcohol
- smoke
- take sleeping tablets
- make any important decisions or sign any contracts.

What if I have a problem when I am at home?

If you are worried about your condition, please telephone the Day Surgery Unit on 020 7188 1728 at Guy’s or 020 7188 3222 at St Thomas’. If the Unit is closed, please call 020 7188 7188 and ask to speak to the resident admitting surgeon.

Further information

For more information, please contact the Day Surgery Unit on 020 7188 3222 at St Thomas’ or 020 7188 1728 at Guy’s.

PALS - To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust’s services, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). Ask a member of staff to direct you to PALS or:

t: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas’  t: 020 7188 8803 at Guy’s  e: 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  e: kic@gstt.nhs.uk

Language support services - If you need an interpreter or information about the care you are receiving in the language or format of your choice, please get in touch using the following contact details.

t: 020 7188 8815  fax: 020 7188 5953  e: languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

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