

Gastrointestinal short stay service on Nightingale Ward

This leaflet explains more about the care you will receive after your surgery under the short stay surgical service provided on Nightingale Ward. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is the short stay service?

Our short stay surgical service is led by a group of senior surgical nurses based on Nightingale Ward. The service is supported by your consultant surgeons and is recovery-focused - it aims to enhance your recovery and enable you to return home safely and efficiently. On arrival at the ward you will receive a plan for the next 24 to 48 hours, which will be decided upon by your consultant surgeon.

This programme aims to help you recover from your surgery and regain your independence as quickly as possible. There is good evidence that eating, drinking, moving around soon after your operation, and having good control of your pain helps speed up recovery. Therefore, the programme emphasises these aspects of your recovery and focuses on how you can help yourself, with support from our nursing team, after your surgery. You will be involved in your 'nursing plan' from your admission to the ward, and supported throughout your inpatient stay to ensure a positive and safe recovery and discharge.

Does it change anything related to my care?

No, your care will remain the same. Both the surgical and nursing teams will work together to set goals for you to achieve to aid your recovery and will support you through the recovery process.

We aim for all patients to be discharged before 11am to ensure that you are home at a safe and appropriate time.

If you are unable to return home at this time, you will attend our discharge lounge. Here you will have supportive nursing staff, hot food and a place to wait safely for your next of kin or responsible adult to take you home.

If you are unwell for any reason then, unless your consultant states otherwise, you will remain to have your care provided to you on Nightingale Ward.

Driving after surgery

You should only drive again when you are free of pain and able to perform an emergency stop comfortably. You should check with your insurance company to make sure you are covered to start driving again, as they may refuse to meet a claim if they feel you have driven too soon.

If you are taking painkillers, please check with a pharmacist whether it is safe for you to drive. If you are not sure about when to resume driving, please visit your GP to check your progress.

Pain relief after surgery

It is important that you take your painkillers on a regular basis for the first few days. Taking regular pain relief after your surgery will keep the medication at a constant level in your body, so that it will better control your pain. After a few days, you can gradually reduce these medications until you feel you no longer need them. We will give you a separate leaflet, **Taking painkillers after surgery**, that gives you more information.

One of our senior surgical nurses based on Nightingale Ward will explain any medications that we dispense to you and will be happy to answer any questions that you may have. Always be sure to follow the instructions on the packet and never take more than the recommended dose. Please contact Nightingale Ward or your GP for advice if you find the pain difficult to control.

Alcohol after surgery

You should avoid alcohol for two days after the general anaesthetic. Please read the label on any medication for instructions on drinking alcohol.

Speak to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist before you go home about whether you can drink alcohol, as alcohol should be avoided when taking certain painkillers. If you can drink alcohol, it should only be in moderation (a glass of wine in the evening, or one pint of beer or lager per day is acceptable).

Fit note on discharge

If you are receiving treatment either as an inpatient (staying in hospital overnight) or as an outpatient attending a clinic and it is assessed that you will not be able to work for more than seven days in a row, you are entitled to request a fit note from a hospital doctor.

Your employer will be able to provide information on taking sick leave and self-certification, or you can visit the GOV.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/taking-sick-leave>

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your recovery at home, please contact Nightingale Ward on **020 7188 8865** and one of our experienced ward nurses will be happy to assist you.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Useful sources of information

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

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

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

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, please get in touch.

t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

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