

# Post-Operative Recovery Guide

Recovering from surgery takes time. The information below outlines what to expect after your procedure and how to care for yourself during your recovery. This information is intended as a general guide and does not replace the specific instructions provided by your surgeon. Always follow your surgeon's advice and postoperative recommendations.

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## Wound healing:

You will receive written instructions regarding wound care and when to remove your dressing. If there is bleeding or you have any other concerns, please contact the hospital or your surgeon's rooms.

Seek help if the amount of pain in your wound increases, if the amount of redness and/or swelling increases and if there is any discharge from your wound or you have chills or a fever.

## Showering/bathing:

You may shower with your dressing on - pat dry after showering. We recommend waiting until the day after surgery to shower.

## Clothing:

Loose clothing is generally more comfortable.

## Driving:

Following a general anaesthetic, you are legally prohibited from driving for 24 hours. The time at which you can safely start driving varies a great deal with the type of operation you have had. Ask your surgeon for specific advice regarding commencement of driving. Do remember that your movement and strength must be up to coping with an emergency stop as well as normal driving.

Strong pain relief medications (e.g. Tramadol or Codeine) can affect your ability to drive. It is recommended that you wait 12 hours after taking these medications before driving.

## Moving:

A gradual increase in the amount of exercise you take is helpful, starting with a short walk two or three times a day and increasing the distance over the next few days.

Some patients may be discharged with support/anti-embolism stockings. It is essential that you wear these for the length of time specified by your surgeon. Usually once you are fully mobile, these may be taken off.

## Sexual activity:

There is no absolute rule about the time at which you can resume your usual sexual relationship. Ask your surgeon for advice.

## Household jobs and lifting:

The sort of movements that can cause discomfort are bending or stretching (e.g. reaching high or low shelves), lifting heavy weights (including small children), and pushing or pulling (such as vacuuming or mowing the lawn).

If help is available for the first week after discharge it is very useful.

## General advice:

Many people are surprised at the length of time it takes them to get over an operation even if it is fairly minor, but time, nature and a bit of determination are usually effective.

Do not be afraid to ask for advice, however small your worry may seem. A few words can often save a lot of anxiety.

## Bowels:

Changes in diet, activity and the use of some drugs can lead to irregular bowel habits but this usually rights itself with time and additional fluids. A diet high in fibre and fruit will help prevent constipation.

## Work:

The time at which you can return to work depends on both the type of operation you have had and what your job is. It is better to feel completely well before you return - many people feel tired and find concentration difficult to start with.

More specific advice can be given to you by your surgeon.

## Smoking/Vaping:

Smoking/Vaping is not permitted in our building.

