

Quick guide to coming into hospital for surgery

This booklet outlines the important things you need to know and understand before you have your operation so please read it carefully.

More detailed information about each section in this booklet can be found in the 'Coming into hospital' booklet available on the Trust website

www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/Coming_into_hospital/

Please contact 0118 322 8338 or email talktous@royalberkshire.nhs.uk if you would like this information in another language or format.

Your operation

- Your pre-operative assessment nurse is: _____
- Your expected length of stay in hospital will be _____ days.
- Your date of discharge will be _____.

Medication

Stop the following as indicated. Continue all other medications as usual.

Medication	When to stop

Tests/fasting

If you have been asked to have a blood test please ensure this occurs as surgery may not proceed without it. If there is a problem with your medications, or if you do not follow the fasting instructions correctly, it may result in your operation being cancelled or postponed.

Useful numbers

Pre-operative assessment	0118 322 6546
Pre-op (ENT only)	0118 322 7146
Pre-op (Gynae only)	0118 322 5375
Pre-op (Eyes only)	0118 322 6908 / 7173/ 01753 636496 (PCEU)
Orthopaedic waiting list	0118 322 7428 / 7379 / 7569 / 8974 / 8432
General surgery waiting list	0118 322 7774 / 8158
Urology waiting list	0118 322 7330
Ear Nose Throat (ENT) waiting list	0118 322 7139
Gynaecology waiting list	0118 322 7184 / 7185
Eyes waiting list	0118 322 7173
Central Cancellation Line	0118 322 8557



Before you come into hospital

- If you smoke, consider giving up. Ask your GP for smoke free information. The hospital is a smoke free environment so no smoking is allowed.
- If you are overweight, seek help to reduce your weight before surgery.
- Check any loose/broken teeth or crowns with your dentist.
- Discuss any long-term medical problems with your GP.
- Do not wear make up, nail varnish, false nails or jewellery (other than wedding rings).

Cancelling or rearranging your operation

- Contact your pre-op department if you have a cold, flu or diarrhoea.
- Contact your pre-op department if you have been in contact with someone who is MRSA positive (after your pre-op appointment).
- Contact the Central Cancellation line if you do not want surgery any more.
- Contact the Central Cancellation line if you do not think you need surgery.

Preparing at home

- Tell your neighbours and friends that you will be in hospital.
- Cancel your milk or paper delivery if necessary.
- Make sure that anybody (or thing) you are responsible for can be cared for in your absence.
- Stock up on some food for when you come out – e.g. freeze some milk/bread.
- Make sure you have some painkillers such as Paracetamol or Ibuprofen at home. We will give you something stronger if it is needed.
- Make sure you have enough of any prescription medications to last you during any recovery time.
- Identify someone who can collect and take you home when you are discharged.



What to bring with you

Ward storage space is very limited so please only bring in what you need.

- All medicines you are taking (in their original packaging, not a dossett or nomad box).
- A dressing gown, socks and slippers.
- Comfortable warm daywear including underwear.
- Nightwear (if staying overnight).
- Lightweight comfortable shoes that are easy to put on/take off.
- Spectacles and hearing aids, if necessary.
- Walking aids, if necessary.
- Shaving/wash kit and towel (if staying overnight).
- Denture box and cleaner, if necessary.
- Sanitary towels or tampons, if necessary.
- Tissues/freshening wipes.
- Books/E-reader, magazines, pens and paper.
- Money for newspapers, telephones and Hospedia television.
- Bottle of squash (if staying overnight).

Personal belongings

- Do not bring in jewellery, large sums of money or other valuables.
- If you wear dentures, spectacles and/or hearing aids, please keep them safe while you are in hospital.
- **The Trust is not liable and does not take responsibility for loss or damage to your personal property.**

Interpreting and signing

- If you need language support please let your pre-op department know as soon as possible.
- Many wards have an induction loop to assist wearing hearing aids.



Religious/cultural needs

- Let the pre-op department know if you have any particular religious, cultural or dietary requirement that you feel it is important to maintain during your stay in hospital.

Single sex accommodation

- Our Trust is committed to ensuring all patients are treated with dignity and respect and that their privacy is maintained at all times.
- Single sex accommodation maybe provided on single sex wards (the whole ward has either all male or all female patients).
- More commonly, there will be single sex bays or rooms within mixed wards (separate areas for male and female patients with designated single sex toilets and washing facilities near the beds).

Car parking

- Public parking is pay on foot (ticket on entry and pay at machine in car park before leaving).
- Current car park charges and facility details can be found on the Trust website www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

When can I last eat and drink before my operation?

- Please follow any instructions to reduce any complications.
- Please eat and drink up until the times given – do not fast for longer than necessary!
- **Do not suck sweets or chew gum on the day of your operation.**



The day before your operation

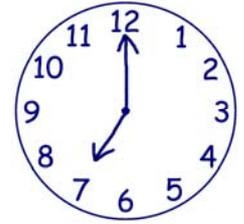
- Keep alcohol consumption to a minimum.
- Avoid fatty and heavy foods.

If you are admitted the night before your operation

- Eat as normal before you come into hospital.
- Ward staff will tell you when to start fasting.

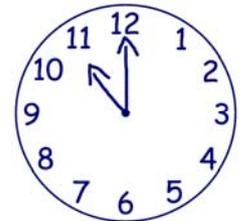
If your admission time is 7am or 7.30am

- You can eat until 2.30am. Have supper before going to bed to reduce the time you are fasted.
- You can have clear fluids until 6.30am on the morning of admission.
- We recommend you do have a drink of water at 6.30am.



If your admission time is 11am or 12.30pm

- You can eat until 7.30am. Have a light breakfast (cereal or toast) on the morning of admission.
- You can have clear fluids until 11.30am on the morning of admission.
- We recommend you do have a drink of water at 11.30am.



Clear fluids

- Water.
- Black tea/black coffee.
- Well diluted squash (not fruit juice).

Understanding your operation and consent

- In preparation for your operation it is important that you fully understand what will happen to you, including any possible risks and side effects.
- You should be given a leaflet about your operation by the doctor or the pre-op nurse. Please ask your pre-op department if you want more information.
- You will be asked to sign a consent form to say you understand the operation and to give the doctors permission to carry out treatment.
- Please ask questions and make certain that the correct part of your body has been marked.
- Please discuss any concerns or anxieties you may have with your doctor and/or nurse. They will be happy to discuss these with you.
- You can change your mind, even after signing the consent form.

Your anaesthetic

- Anaesthesia stops you feeling pain and other sensations.
- Anaesthetics are given by anaesthetists – doctors with specialist training. They are responsible for your wellbeing and safety and will agree a plan with you for your pain control, depending on what surgery you are having and your individual health.
- It can be given in various ways and does not always make you unconscious.
- Local anaesthesia involves injections which numb a small part of your body. You stay conscious but free from pain.
- Regional anaesthesia (RA) is the term used to describe numbing only a part of the body. This is done by injecting a local anaesthetic near a group of nerves. This may be either a nerve block or an epidural / spinal.
- An epidural or spinal is an injection in the back to numb your tummy or legs. You may feel pushing or pulling during your operation but it should not be painful.
- Sometimes regional anaesthesia is performed in addition to a general anaesthetic in order to provide pain relief after your operation.
- General anaesthesia (GA) is when a patient is given drugs to make them unconscious for surgery. It is the most common form of anaesthetic.
- Sedation is the use of small amounts of anaesthetic or similar drugs to produce a sleepy-like state. It makes you physically and mentally relaxed. However, you may still have some awareness and recall of events. Sedation is not the same as a general anaesthetic.
- If you are anxious about having an anaesthetic, the Trust has produced a short film which aims to address some of your concerns. Visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/trust-videos.htm and click on 'Your Anaesthetic'.
- For more information about anaesthetics including detailed side effects and complications, visit the Royal College of Anaesthetists website and download their leaflet entitled 'You and your anaesthetic' www.rcoa.ac.uk/node/1847

Pain relief

- It is the role of doctors and nurses to help reduce any pain you may experience following your operation.
- You may be given painkilling drugs as tablets, liquids, injections, epidural, patient controlled analgesia pump or nerve blocks. The method will depend on your individual circumstances.
- Nursing staff will also try to help relieve any pain or discomfort by providing extra pillows and helping you change position.
- Your nurse may show you a pain chart to help assess your pain and identify what analgesia can be given.
- You will be given painkillers regularly every few hours but you can ask for more if you still experience pain or discomfort. The clinical staff may decide it is necessary to change the drug given or the way it is given to make it more effective.
- Some painkillers have side effects such as drowsiness, sickness or constipation. Let your nurse know if you experience any of these.

Blood clots (Venous Thromboembolism)

- Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) is the name given to blood clots that form in deep veins, usually in the legs or groin and which can break off and travel to the lung causing a pulmonary embolism, which can be serious.
- VTE is a major cause of death in patients who spend time in hospital.
- Some patients are more at risk of developing VTE in hospital so the clinical staff will assess your individual risk at the pre-op appointment and upon admission to determine what appropriate preventative measures can be taken to lessen the risk of a clot forming.
- You may get one or more of the following:
 - Medication
 - Mobilising and exercises
 - Anti-embolism stockings
 - Plenty of fluids
 - Compression devices
- Ways of helping prevent VTE include eating a balanced diet, drinking plenty of fluid, losing weight and mobilising and exercises to help pump blood around the body.

MRSA

- MRSA stands for Meticillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (a type of germ).
- Most people with MRSA carry it without causing harm to themselves or others.
- Some people are more at risk of developing an MRSA infection, particularly those undergoing invasive procedures that allow the bacteria to get from the skin into the body and those who are ill or elderly.
- MRSA is spread from person to person, usually by hand to hand contact.
- To find out if you have MRSA living on your skin, your pre-op nurse will take a swab from your nose, throat, armpit, groin or any open wounds.
- When the swab is analysed, if MRSA is found (known as colonisation) you will be given cream to put up your nose and a hair/wash solution to use.
- These will reduce the number of bacteria on your skin before you come into surgery.

Planning for discharge (leaving hospital)

- We have established a standard time – 10am – for all hospital discharges.
- Before you are discharged, members of your health care team will discuss discharge plans with you and provide information on follow-up appointments, medications and other instructions necessary to follow at home.
- To enable you and your family members to make arrangements, your doctor or nurse will discuss with you as early as possible the date of planned discharge.
- If you are unable to leave the hospital by 10.00am on the day of discharge, you will be encouraged to wait in our Discharge Lounge until you are collected.

Talk to us

- If you have a comment about the service we provide – positive or negative – talk to us. Your feedback will help us to improve and develop our service.
- We prefer to sort out issues as they arise as often they can be dealt with quickly and effectively. Please speak to your nurse or ask to speak to the Ward Sister or Manager or the Matron.
- Alternatively, you can speak to PALS (Patient Advice & Liaison Service). Ring 0118 322 8338 or email talktous@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

How to make a complaint

- If you would like to make a formal complaint, please write or email the Patient Relations Team, Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, London Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 5AN email: talktous@royalberkshire.nhs.uk
- The NHS has a procedure for dealing with complaints received from patients, relatives, friends and carers. We take all complaints seriously and will take action where appropriate. Further details are available in the Trust leaflet called How to make a complaint.

Friends and Family Test

- Before you leave hospital you will be asked 'How likely are you to recommend this ward/day unit to friends and family if they needed similar care or treatment?' Your answer will help us to monitor our services and to make improvements where necessary so please spare a few moments of your time to answer this question and to explain why you gave the score you did.
- You can also post any feedback or suggestions you may have into one of the comments boxes around the hospital, using the back of the 'Talk to us' leaflet. If you would like a response to your feedback, please include your contact details.

Making your stay with us safe

9 simple steps to keep yourself safe during your stay in hospital

Safe surgery

- Before you have your operation we will do a series of checks – tell us if you have any concerns or questions.
- Tell us if any of your details are wrong.
- Tell us which part of your body we are operating on.
- Tell us if the site of your surgery is not marked correctly.



Preventing falls

- Wear the red hospital socks, laced up or snug fitting shoes or slippers with rubber soles.
- Use your usual walking aids.
- If you need any assistance, tell us.



Pressure ulcers

- If you can, try to keep mobile, even in bed, and call us if you are uncomfortable.
- We are happy to help you change position, and can provide a special mattress or cushion for support.



Preventing blood clots

- Wear your hospital stockings if advised and move as often as you can.
- Try to do simple leg and ankle exercises.
- Drink fluids as recommended.
- Take blood thinning tablets or injections as advised.



Identification

- Tell us if any of your personal information is wrong (ID band, address, GP, next of kin).
- Tell us if you have any allergies and we will give you a red ID band.



Preventing infection

- Wash / cleanse your hands before and after visiting the toilet, and before all meals.
- Ask our staff if they have washed their hands before any contact with you.
- Tell us if you have diarrhoea or vomiting.



Any concerns

- We are here to help you – talk to us if you have any worries or concerns about your treatment, or what will happen when you leave hospital.

Patient Relations Team

0118 322 8338

talktous@royalberkshire.nhs.uk



Your medicines

- Tell us if you have an allergy, or if you do not understand what your medicines are for.
- Talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist about any concerns you may have.
- Ask about any possible side effects.



Leaving hospital

Before you leave, make sure you:

- Have your discharge letter.
- Have your medicines and they have been explained to you.
- Know who to contact if you have any questions or concerns.
- Know when your next appointment is.

Medicines Helpline 0118 322 7642

Mon-Fri 1pm-3pm

medicines.information@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

