

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, paying particular attention to advice in bold.**

Please contact 0118 322 8338 or email

PALs@royalberkshire.nhs.uk if you would like this information in another language or format.

Please organise someone to collect you and take you home. Your operation may be cancelled if you do not do this.

Your operation

- Your pre-operative assessment nurse is: _____
- Your date of admission is: _____ at time: _____
please do **not** arrive before the time stated on your appointment letter. If you arrive early, please wait in of the cafés or general seating areas until the correct time. **There is only enough space for one hand luggage sized bag.**
- Your **expected** length of stay in hospital will be _____ days.
- Your date of discharge will be _____.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance for elective (planned) surgery

- **Follow strict social distancing rules for 14 days before your planned procedure.**
- **Self-isolate with members of your household after your COVID-19 swab test (done 48-72 hours before your planned procedure).**
- If you have been assessed as having an increased risk, we may recommend that you self-isolate for 14 days before you come in. **Self-isolation means you must remain at home.** This will avoid any unnecessary risk to your upcoming surgery.
- If you have been told to self-isolate by the Track and Trace service, or have been in contact with someone who has tested positive, in the two weeks before your procedure, **please contact the relevant CAT Team** (see page 3).

Medication

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

Medication	When to stop
All herbal supplements	2 weeks prior to surgery
Anticoagulation (blood thinning) medication	

Tests / fasting

If you have been asked to have a blood test, please ensure this occurs or surgery may be delayed. (You can book blood test appointments at Reading and Bracknell online by visiting https://www.swiftqueue.co.uk/royal_berkshire.php.)

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 Townlands only)	01865 903273
Pre-op (ENT RBH Reading only)	0118 322 7487
Pre-op (Oral & Maxillofacial only)	0118 322 7487
Pre-op (Gynae only)	0118 322 5375 / 7191
Pre-op (Eyes only)	0118 322 6908 / 7173 (RBH)
Pre-op (Eyes only)	01753 636496 (PCEU)
Townlands ENT Outpatients Reception	01865 903274
Orthopaedic CAT 5	0118 322 7415
General surgery CAT 3	0118 322 6890
Urology CAT 3a	0118 322 8629
ENT / Oral & Maxillofacial CAT 1	0118 322 7139
Gynaecology CAT 6	0118 322 8964
Eyes CAT 2	0118 322 7169 (RBH)
Eyes CAT 2a	01753 636394 (PCEU)



Canceling or rearranging your operation

Contact the relevant Clinical Admin Team (CAT) (numbers above) if you no longer want or need surgery.

- **Contact the CAT if you have any Coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms – high temperature, new continuous cough, loss or change to sense of smell or taste – during your period of self-isolation or just prior to your surgery date.**
- Contact the CAT if you have a cold, flu or diarrhoea in the period leading up to your operation date. You must be 48 hours clear of symptoms.
- Contact the Pre-Op Department if you have been in contact with someone who is MRSA positive after your pre-op appointment.
- Contact the Pre-Op Department if there are any changes in your health status or medication after your pre-op appointment and before your operation date.

Before you come into hospital

- If you smoke, consider giving up. If you need support, please contact smokefreelife Berkshire on 0800 622 6360 or visit www.smokefreelifeberkshire.com.
 - If you are overweight, try to lose weight before surgery.
 - Check any loose/broken teeth or crowns with your dentist.
 - Discuss any uncontrolled medical problems with your GP.
 - Do not wear make up, nail varnish, false nails or jewellery (other than wedding rings).
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Preparing at home

- Tell your neighbours and friends that you will be in hospital.
- Cancel your milk and papers if necessary.
- Make sure that anybody/pets 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 Paracetamol or Ibuprofen at home, as long as you are able to tolerate those medications. We will give you something stronger if it is needed.
- Make sure you have enough prescription medications to last you during recovery.
- If you are an orthopaedic patient, you should have been given a bottle of body wash called Octenisan to use for five days prior to surgery. Please call the Pre-Op Department if you do not have the Octenisan body wash.
- **Identify an adult who can collect and take you home either by car or taxi when you are discharged. Make sure they are available to collect you at the appropriate time. Please inform the appropriate CAT if you do not have transport available.**

On the day of your procedure (COVID-19 guidance)

- **Please attend alone unless you have a specific clinical / social need to be accompanied by a family member or carer. If this is the case, it is important to let the nurse at your pre-operative assessment appointment or the relevant CAT know in advance. If it is agreed, your carer may need to be swabbed and will also need to self-isolate prior to the procedure.**
 - **Hand gel and hand washing facilities are widely available throughout the hospital; please to use these frequently during your visit.**
 - **You must also wear a face mask/covering over your mouth and nose. Please plan in advance and bring one with you, otherwise, a single-use facemask will be provided. You will be advised on the ward when you need to wear it.**
 - All planned procedures and day surgery beds are located at a safe distance from areas where COVID-19 patients are being cared for, and all necessary safety precautions will be followed. Visitors are currently not permitted within these areas to maintain patient safety.
 - The staff looking after you will be wearing protective personal equipment (PPE), such as facemasks, gloves, visors and aprons.
 - Patients will have their temperatures checked as part of routine observations.
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What to bring with you

Storage space is limited so please only bring in one hand luggage sized bag.

On admission, please wear comfortable daywear and lightweight comfortable shoes that are easy to put on/take off.

- All medicines you are taking in their original packaging, not a dossett box. Nomad boxes dispensed by pharmacists are fine, as they will be labelled appropriately.
- CPAP machine if you use one.
- Spectacles and hearing aids, if worn.
- Walking aids, if used.
- A dressing gown and nightwear.
- Shaving/wash kit, to include shower gel/soap, toothbrush/toothpaste and towel.
- Denture box and cleaner, if necessary.
- Sanitary towels or tampons, if necessary.
- Books/E-reader, magazines, pens and paper.

The Trust is not liable and does not take responsibility for loss or damage to your personal property. DO NOT bring jewellery, large sums of money, or other valuables into hospital. Please keep your personal items safe while you are in hospital.

Interpreting and signing

- If you need language support, please let the relevant CAT know at least 48 hours prior to admission.
- Many wards have an induction loop to assist wearing hearing aids.
- If you have hearing impairment and need to lipread, please let us know, and we will remove our face masks.



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 may be 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).
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Car parking

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

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.
- Your surgeon should give you access to information about your operation. Please ask the pre-op department if you would like more information or visit our website www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.
- 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 before you go to theatre.
- The Trust uses an electronic system for consenting. You may have the option to review information online and sign electronically.
- **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.

Medical certificate

- If you need a medical certificate (sick note) for your employer, **please inform your nurse when you are admitted** so they can prepare it in readiness for your discharge.

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

- Do not drink alcohol.
 - Avoid fatty and heavy foods.
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If your admission time is 7am – 7.30am (please check your letter)

- 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 your admission.
- We recommend you **do** have a drink of water at 6.30am.

If your admission time is 11am or 12.30pm (please check your letter)

- 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 your admission.
- We recommend you **do** have a drink of water at 11.30am.
- You may be asked to provide a urine sample on admission, so **please do not empty your bladder immediately before admission**, in case one is required.

Clear fluids

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

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 feel no 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 uses 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 that aims to address some of your concerns. Visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/trust-videos.htm and click on 'Your Anaesthetic'.

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- 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
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Safety

- Due to the way in which an anaesthetic works, there is an increased risk of you having a fall during the first 24-48 hours after your operation. It is really important that when you get up to mobilise during this period, you ring your call bell, so that one of the nursing staff can assist you.
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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.
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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
 - Plenty of fluids
 - Compression devices
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- Or rarely, anti-embolism stockings
 - 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.
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MRSA / VRE swabs

- You will be given a leaflet explaining this in more detail.
 - We routinely swab all orthopaedic patients for MRSA. We will also swab other surgical patients if they have been an inpatient in the last 12 months, or live in a care home. This will be a nose and throat swab and an open wound swab if you have one.
 - We may perform a VRE swab on you if you have been an inpatient within the last year, or if you are high risk (e.g. healthcare workers or residents in a nursing home). This will be a rectal swab (swab from your bottom).
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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 transferred to our Discharge Lounge until you are collected.
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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 manager or matron.
- Alternatively, you can speak to the Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS). Ring 0118 322 8338 or email PALS@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

How to make a complaint

- If you would like to make a formal complaint, please write or email the Patient Advice & Liaison (PALS) Team, Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, London Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 5AN or email: complaints@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 'Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS): Help for patients, relatives and carers'.

Friends and Family Test

- Before you leave hospital, you will be asked '**Overall, how was your experience of our service?**' 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. If you would like a response to your feedback, please include your contact details.
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Notes:

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

- Move around as much and often as you can.
- Try to do simple leg and ankle exercises.
- Eat a balanced diet and drink plenty of fluids.
- 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

