

Horton Day Case Unit

# Information and advice after a laparoscopic procedure under general anaesthetic



## Driving

Anaesthetic drugs remain the body for up to 48 hours and gradually wear off over this time. After your anaesthetic, while you still have the drugs in your body, it is important that you **do not drive a car or any other vehicle, or ride a bicycle, for 48 hours after your anaesthetic.**

After this time you need to consider whether your wound or any pain may prevent you from driving. An indication of whether you are able to drive safely is if you are able to perform an emergency stop comfortably. We suggest that you get into your car and while it is parked see if you can perform an emergency stop. When we discharge you we will give you specific instructions relating to driving after the type of surgery you have had.

## The next 24 hours

- **do not be left on your own for the next 24 hours**
- Do not operate machinery or appliances – e.g. cooker, kettle
- Do not lock yourself in the bathroom or toilet, or make yourself inaccessible to the person looking after you
- Drink plenty of fluids and eat a light diet, avoiding heavy or greasy foods
- Avoid alcohol
- Arrange some time off work and avoid strenuous exercise
- Do not make any important decisions or sign any legal or other important documents.

## Signs to look out for after laparoscopic surgery

It is natural to experience some degree of tummy pains following this procedure. You may also experience some discomfort in your shoulder or sternum (breast bone). This is because of the gas used in your tummy during your operation. This type of pain usually disappears after a few hours.

If you develop any of the following symptoms in the 24 hours after your operation:

- pain becoming increasingly severe that is not controlled with pain killers
- worsening nausea or vomiting preventing you from getting enough fluids
- new fresh or increased bleeding
- problems passing urine

please contact us on one of the numbers below.

### **E Ward (Horton surgical inpatient ward)**

**24 hours**

**01295 229216**

### **Day Case Unit**

**9am - 5pm**

**01295 229383**

Alternatively please contact your nearest A&E department stating what operation you have had.

**After 24 hours please contact your GP surgery for further advice.**

## Wound care

You will have 3 or 4 small incisions (cuts) which have been stitched with dissolvable stitches. These cuts are covered with small white dressings. A small amount of bleeding into this dressing is normal.

Please avoid getting the wounds wet for approximately 48 hours. After this time you may bath or shower. Please avoid using any additives in the water such as oils or bubble bath and also avoid using soap in the immediate area. When you are dry please replace the white dressings – your nurse will send you home with a small supply. The stitches will take a few weeks to dissolve completely.

If you notice any signs of infection – high temperature, redness / swelling or a general feeling of being unwell – please contact your GP.

## Follow-up

A follow-up appointment is not always required.

If the Doctor needs to see you in clinic an appointment will be posted on to you.

Follow-up not needed / needed in ..... weeks.

# Pain relief at home – a guide to your painkillers and how to take them

You may have been given more than one type of painkiller to take home with you. This is because each type of painkiller works in a different way to help relieve your pain. The types of painkiller are:

- Paracetamol
- An anti-inflammatory, for example, Diclofenac or Ibuprofen
- A morphine based painkiller, for example, Codeine Phosphate, Tramadol

It is safe to take the different types of painkiller together or at different times of the day. The following section will help you choose which painkiller to take according to the severity of the pain.

## **Mild Pain**

Take your paracetamol regularly as prescribed on the prescription label. Do not take more than 8 tablets in 24 hours.

## **Moderate pain**

Take your paracetamol regularly and also your anti-inflammatory painkiller as described on the prescription label.

If you have not been prescribed an anti-inflammatory painkiller, take your morphine based painkiller as described on the prescription label and also take your paracetamol.

You may find that you only need to take the morphine based painkiller once or twice during the day.

## **Severe pain**

Take all your painkillers on a regular basis as described on the prescription labels. It may be of benefit to take your paracetamol

and morphine based ones together and to take the anti-inflammatory ones 2-3 hours later.

The morphine based painkiller may cause constipation. If this happens, drink plenty of fluids and increase your intake of dietary fibre.

It is advisable to take only one 30mg (1 tablet) of codeine at first. If the pain settles then there is no need to take any more. If the pain does not settle then a further 30mg (1 tablet) may be taken.

**Pain relief**

**Next due at**

Paracetamol .....

Ibuprofen .....

Codeine .....

**How long will I need to take my painkillers?**

As healing occurs you will feel less pain. Once your pain is controlled and is mild, you should only take paracetamol. If your pain remains severe for more than a few days or is not relieved by your painkillers, you should contact your GP.

Never give prescribed tablets to other people as they may not be safe for them to take. Any left over painkillers should be taken to your local pharmacy for safe disposal.

**Keep all medicines out of the reach of children.**

## Let us know your views

We would like to hear your comments or suggestions.

Please contact us at: [horton.daycase@orh.nhs.uk](mailto:horton.daycase@orh.nhs.uk)

Alternatively you can write to:

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If you need an interpreter or need a document in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221473** or email **PALSJR@orh.nhs.uk**

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