

Information and advice following rectal/anal surgery



This leaflet has been written to give you general advice following a surgical procedure on your anus or rectum.

It is important to remember that everyone recovers at different rates and not all people will experience the same symptoms following this type of surgery.

What to expect after your surgery

Some degree of pain is expected following any type of surgery. How severe this pain may be will depend on the type of procedure you have had.

Depending on the type of surgery you have had, you may also have some discharge from the area of the operation.

The nurse looking after you will give you advice about your recovery which relates specifically to your procedure.

Personal care

Please do not overdo bathing and wiping of your bottom area. This will make you sore. However, please do try to keep the area clean and dry. Ladies sanitary towels are very useful, especially the thin/ ultra-thin night time variety, as they can be placed in the back of your underwear so they cover the area which has been treated.

We advise that you avoid:

- strenuous activity for the following two weeks (such walking long distances or jogging)
- lifting of heavy items over 5kg for two weeks (such as young children or heavy bags of shopping).

Sexual intercourse

You should abstain from sexual intercourse and not put anything into your rectum or vagina (including tampons) for two weeks after the procedure, as this may cause further damage to your rectum or anus.

After two weeks you can return to sexual intercourse if you feel comfortable, but please still take care not to cause further damage to you anus or rectum.

Constipation

You should try to avoid becoming constipated as this may mean you have to strain when you use the toilet. Excessive straining may cause further complications or damage to your anus or rectum. Try to keep your bowel movements regular. Increasing the amount of fibre in your diet may help, such as fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as drinking more fluids.

Alternatively, you can purchase a medicine called lactulose which can help to loosen your bowel movements. This is available from any chemist or pharmacy. You can also purchase a tablet called senna, which provides gentle but effective relief from constipation. Your chemist should be able to advise you further on whether these are suitable for you to take.

If you are lactose intolerant or for any reason you are unable to take lactulose please seek advice from your GP.

Risk of complications

All procedures carry some risks. These should have been explained to you before the operation. For rectal or anal surgery the risks include:

- excessive pain which cannot be controlled by over the counter painkillers
- continuous bleeding
- infection – symptoms of which are a high temperature, feeling unwell and a smelly discharge which is different to usual.

If you are at all worried about any of these symptoms please contact your GP. If you are unable to contact your GP please go to your nearest Accident and Emergency department. Take with you any paperwork that has been given to you following your procedure today.

Stitches

If any stitches (sutures) have been used to repair your wound they will usually be dissolvable. Your body will absorb them over the following few weeks. If you do find that any of the stitches remain or are uncomfortable or scratchy, please contact your GP.

Follow-up

Your nurse will tell you whether you will need a follow-up appointment. If you do, the time and date will be posted to you. The appointment will usually be sent 6-8 weeks after your operation.

For specific instructions after a general anaesthetic, emergency contact numbers and information about how to take pain relief tablets please see our leaflet 'Information and advice after a surgical procedure under general anaesthetic'; your nurse will give you a copy.

If you have any questions after reading this leaflet please speak to a member of staff; they will be happy to help you.

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**

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