

Blenheim Head and Neck Unit, Churchill Hospital

Preparing for your operation

Information for patients



Important

Before you come to the hospital please read this leaflet carefully and follow the instructions.

Day before surgery

You may eat and drink normally and then please keep to the following instructions.

Day of surgery

If you are having a **local anaesthetic** (when you stay awake and the part of your body to be operated upon is made numb):

- **You can eat and drink as normal, but please make sure you have a light breakfast or light lunch, depending upon your admission time.**
- **Please make sure you take your normal medications on the morning of your surgery.**

DIABETIC PATIENTS:

- You can eat and drink as normal and should take your diabetic medicine or insulin as normal.

If you are having a **general anaesthetic** (where you are made to be asleep during the operation) **including local anaesthetic with intravenous sedation:**

Please make sure that you follow these fasting (starving) instructions, which should also be included with your appointment letter. Fasting is very important before an operation. If you have anything in your stomach whilst you are under anaesthetic or sedation, it might come back up while you are unconscious and get into your lungs.

Fasting instructions

MORNING LIST: (Admission time 7.30am)

Nothing to eat from midnight.

You can drink clear fluids (i.e. **black** tea/**black** coffee, water) up until 6.30am.

Please note: You should not drink anything containing milk.

DIABETIC PATIENTS:

Nothing to eat from midnight.

You can drink clear fluids (i.e. **black** tea/**black** coffee, water) up until 6.30am.

Please note: You should not drink anything containing milk.

Medication

EVENING BEFORE: Take only ½ your normal dose of **long acting** diabetic medication.

DO NOT take your morning dose of diabetic tablets or insulin.

AFTERNOON LIST: (Admission time 11.30am)

Nothing to eat after 7.30am.

You can drink clear fluids (i.e. **black** tea/**black** coffee, water) up until 11.30am.

Please note: You should not drink anything containing milk.

DIABETIC PATIENTS:

Nothing to eat after 7.30am.

You can drink clear fluids (i.e. **black** tea/**black** coffee, water) up until 11.30am.

Please note: You should not drink anything containing milk.

Medication

Take ½ your morning dose of insulin.

Take your normal dose of **short acting** diabetic tablets.

DO NOT take your long acting diabetic tablets.

EVENING LIST: (Admission time 2.00pm onwards)

Nothing to eat after 12.00noon.

You can drink clear fluids (i.e. **black** tea/**black** coffee, water) up until 4.00pm.

Please note: You should not drink anything containing milk.

DIABETIC PATIENTS:

Nothing to eat after 12.00noon.

You can drink clear fluids (i.e. **black** tea/**black** coffee, water) up until 4.00pm.

Please note: You should not drink anything containing milk.

Medication

Take your normal morning dose of insulin.

Take your normal dose of **short acting** diabetic tablets.

Take ½ your normal dose of **long acting** diabetic tablets.

Please do not chew gum or eat sweets on the day of your surgery, as this increases the amount of stomach acid and can result in your surgery being cancelled.

Operation day

Please come to the unit or ward that is detailed in your admission letter.

When you arrive

The nurse who is looking after you will meet you, check your paperwork and then take your blood pressure and pulse. If you think you may need a sick certificate (to sign you off work), this is a good time to let the nurse know.

The surgeon will visit you to talk through the operation with you and ask you to sign a consent form.

If you are having a general anaesthetic or intravenous (IV) sedation, you will also be visited by the anaesthetist, to confirm you are fit to have a general anaesthetic.

Preparation for surgery

Your nurse will prepare you for theatre.

If you are having a **general anaesthetic**:

You will need to remove contact lenses, dentures, make-up, nail varnish and all jewellery. You may be allowed to wear a wedding band, but this will be covered with tape.

We will give you a special gown to wear which fastens at the back, and some special socks to help prevent you developing blood clots in your legs. You may wear your

own cotton pants/boxer shorts. Please bring a dressing gown and slippers, as we may walk you along a public corridor to the operating theatre.

Prevention of Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)

For people having general anaesthetic and IV sedation only:

In order to greatly reduce the risk of DVT it is important that you exercise your feet to keep the blood moving in your lower legs, until you are up and about. Your nurse will show you the correct exercises.

You will be asked to wear anti-embolic stockings to theatre and will also have pneumatic compression cuffs placed around your lower legs while you are in theatre/recovery. These expand with air then deflate, to help keep your blood circulating. If you are not able to move around as much as normal after surgery, these may remain in place for a few days.

For further information about the prevention of DVT please refer to the booklet that the pre-assessment nurse has given you.

Going to theatre

You will be taken to the operating theatre, where you will meet the anaesthetic nurse who will look after you during your surgery.

If you are having a general anaesthetic or IV sedation, you will be taken to the recovery room after your surgery. When you have woken up your nurse will collect you and take you back to the ward.

If you are staying overnight, you will be transferred from theatre directly to Blenheim ward. If you are having day case surgery (and not staying overnight) you will be transferred back to the ward or the day surgery unit.

After the surgery

Your nurse will help make you comfortable and monitor your blood pressure and pulse (and temperature if needed). They will explain any drips, drains, packs or bandages you may have, and will give you tablets or injections for pain and sickness if you need them. They will tell you when you can eat and drink.

Visiting times

Blenheim Ward: 10.00am - 1.00pm
3.00pm - 8.00pm

Day Surgery: Open visiting (7.30am - 8.00pm)

Discharge

Day Surgery

Once you have been assessed as 'fit' for discharge your nurse will provide you with the following:

- verbal and written discharge information
- any medications which may have been prescribed
- information about any follow-up appointment you may require.

Overnight stay

On the day of discharge your nurse will:

- make sure that the doctors see you during the ward round
- organise a follow-up appointment if necessary
- care for any dressings or packs that you may have
- explain how long you need to stay off work and give you your sick certificate, if you need one
- give you written discharge instructions and clearly explain any discharge advice
- organise any medication that you need to take home.

Please note that we no longer prescribe simple painkillers such as paracetamol, ibuprofen or co-codamol. **Please make sure you have a supply of suitable painkillers available for when you get home.**

Please be aware – you cannot legally drive for 48 hours after a general anaesthetic or sedation. You will need to arrange for someone to collect you from the hospital. You should not go home on public transport after your operation. You will need to be taken home by car. This will be more comfortable for you and also quicker for you to return to the hospital if there are any complications on the journey home.

Blenheim Unit and Day Surgery Unit Surgery telephone numbers

If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact us on the following numbers:

Pre-operative Assessment Nurses:

01865 223 542

If we are unable to answer the telephone, please leave a message. Messages are listened to at least once a day, from Monday to Friday.

Blenheim Outpatients:

01865 223 540 or **01865 223 541**

(8.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday)

Blenheim Ward:

01865 223 536 or **01865 223 535**

(24 hours)

Day Surgery Unit:

01865 225 283/4

(7.30am to 8.00pm, Monday to Saturday)

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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