

## Colorectal Department

# Going home after colorectal surgery

You have now recovered enough from your operation to start thinking about going home. This information is to help you with any concerns you may have about going home.

Before you are discharged, there are a few things that the team caring for you will want to be sure of:

- all your wounds are healing properly.
- you are eating and drinking sufficiently.
- you are managing to look after yourself.

If you have concerns about any part of your recovery, including the above, please speak to a member of the team.

On the day of discharge, you will be given a letter from the ward nurses. This letter has information about your medication, your outpatient appointments and includes a section about any referrals that may have been made for you, such as with district nurses. A copy of this letter will be sent to your GP.

## Rest, activity, and exercise

Once you are home you may find that you feel tired and lethargic. Some people feel in a low mood for 2 to 3 days. This tiredness may last for several weeks. This is normal after colorectal surgery. You and your body need time to re-adjust after your operation.



## Patient Information

Listen to your body and be aware of your limitations.

Exercise should be done in small amounts to begin with. Alternate periods of rest and activity so that you do not overdo it. Gradually increase your level of exercise until your activity level returns to normal.

## Medication

If you require medication, this will be discussed with you. You will be given a seven-day supply before you leave hospital.

## Pain and discomfort

It is normal to have some pain around the wound after your return home. How much pain will vary with each individual patient.

You will be given some pain killers to take home with you. Take these as directed. If needed, obtain a repeat prescription from your GP.

## Wounds and stitches

Not all patients will have stitches that need removing. If you have stitches, these are normally removed 10 days after your operation.

If you are discharged with stitches in, arrangements will be made for the GP practice nurse to remove them.

Your wound is often swollen and bruised for a few weeks. It may also feel hard and firm. This is due to the stitches in the deep tissue. The wound will soften after several weeks.

There may be an area of numbness below the scar. This soon disappears.

Please check your wound regularly. Contact your GP if you experience any of the following:

- Increased pain or tenderness
- Increased swelling, oozing, or opening of the wound.

## Patient Information

- Redness or warmth around the wound
- If you have a temperature of above 38°C

## Bathing

You may have a bath or shower as you would normally, even with your stitches. Pat the wound as dry as possible.

Avoid using talcum powder until the stitches are removed.

## Diet

You can eat normally unless your doctor advises otherwise. Try and eat a well-balanced diet, aiming for small regular meals, but eat whatever appeals to you. Try not to miss meals or eat too much rich fatty foods.

If a certain food causes problems, stop eating it for a while then try again later.

Vegetables, fruits and drinking lots of fluid will help to prevent constipation.

Alcohol is fine in moderation. Large amounts of beer or lager can cause excessive or smelly wind and loose motions (diarrhoea).

Fizzy drinks can also cause advise that you avoid these for a few days.

For dietary information relevant to your specific surgery, speak to your colorectal specialist nurse.

## Returning to work

Everyone is an individual and recovery from surgery will vary from person to person.

## Patient Information

We would advise you to stay off work for about 3 months. But it could be a little longer depending on the type of work you do. Ask your surgeon or GP for advice.

### **Lifting**

You should only carry things which can be easily lifted in one hand for 3 months after your operation.

### **Driving**

**Don't drive for 3 to 4 weeks** after your operation.

To make sure it is safe to drive after this time, sit in a stationary car and practice an emergency stop by stamping on the brake pedal. If you have no discomfort in the wound area, then you should be all right to drive.

### **Sexual activity**

You may resume your sexual activity when you feel comfortable enough to. Take things gradually – it will take time before you recover.

If you have any problems or worries, do not hesitate to discuss these with your consultant, GP, or colorectal specialist nurse.

### **Patients with a stoma**

While you are in hospital, the colorectal specialist nurse will teach you how to care for your stoma. They will visit you at home after discharge from hospital.

### **Follow-up hospital appointment**

After your operation, your surgeon or one of their team, will want to see you again in the outpatient clinic. This appointment will be sent to you and any other referrals to other specialists will also be sent.

## Patient Information

### Support once you are home

When you leave hospital, you may feel anxious or concerned. This is normal.

If you are worried, need information or are not sure about something about your operation, contact your colorectal specialist nurse. They will be happy to answer your queries.

### Contact numbers for further information:

#### Colorectal specialist nurses

Michelle Hicken, Hannah Davies, Helen Taylor, Sarah Thompson, Caroline Ling, Deepa Philips

**Telephone 024 7696 5825**

### Local services

Service	Location	Phone number
Age UK Coventry Age UK Warwickshire		024 7623 1999 01926 458100
Bowel Screening Unit		01788 545166/667737
Cancer Information Centre	Main Entrance UHCW	024 7696 6052
Health Information Centre	Main Entrance UHCW	024 7696 6051
Coventry Macmillan Care Team	Hospital Community	024 7696 5498 024 7623 7001

## Patient Information

Rugby Macmillan Care Team.	Community	01788 555119
GUT (Cancer Support Group for Coventry & Warwickshire)		024 7696 6475
Hospital Chaplaincy	Hospital	024 7696 7515
Bowel Clinical Trials Nurse	Hospital	024 7696 7151
Specialist Genetic Nurse	Hospital	024 7696 4000
Surgical Counselling Service	Hospital	024 7696 6188
Oncology Counselling Service	Hospital	024 7696 7290
Complimentary Therapies	Hospital	024 7696 7290
Psychosexual Therapy	Hospital	024 7696 7290
Citizens Advice Bureau	Coventry Rugby	024 7625 2050 (appointment only) 0844 855 2322
Coventry Carers Centre	Support for carers	024 7663 2972
Guideposts Trust	Support for carers	024 7638 5888

### **Also available at University Hospital:**

Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Dietitian Service, Social Services

## National contact numbers

Association of Coloproctology for Great Britain and Ireland	<a href="http://www.acpghi.org.uk/patients/">www.acpghi.org.uk/patients/</a>
Beating Bowel Cancer	020 8892 5256 0845 0719 301 (Helpline) <a href="http://www.beatingbowelcancer.org">www.beatingbowelcancer.org</a>
National Cancer Institute (American)	<a href="http://www.cancer.gov">www.cancer.gov</a>
Bowel Cancer UK	020 7381 9711
Colostomy Association	0800 328 4257 <a href="http://www.colostomyassociation.org.uk/">www.colostomyassociation.org.uk/</a>
CORE (The Digestive Disorders Foundation)	020 7486 0341 <a href="http://www.corecharity.org.uk">www.corecharity.org.uk</a>
The Ileostomy & Internal Pouch Support Group (IA)	0800 018 4724 <a href="http://www.the-ia.org.uk">www.the-ia.org.uk</a>
Macmillan Cancer Support	0808 808 0000 <a href="http://www.macmillan.org.uk">www.macmillan.org.uk</a>
Marie Curie Cancer Care	0800 716 146 <a href="http://www.mariecurie.org.uk">www.mariecurie.org.uk</a>

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 5617 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

## Patient Information

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

### Did we get it right?

We would like you to tell us what you think about our services. This helps us make further improvements and recognise members of staff who provide a good service.

Have your say. Scan the QR code or visit:

[www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback](http://www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback)



<b>Document History</b>	
Department:	Colorectal
Contact:	25617
Updated:	July 2023
Review:	July 2025
Version:	5
Reference:	HIC/LFT/1492/12