

Hepatic, Pancreatic & Biliary Service

Going home after your pancreatic surgery

You have now recovered enough from your operation to start thinking about going home. This information sheet 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:

- that all of your wounds are healing properly
- that you are eating and drinking sufficiently
- that you are managing to look after yourself
- that your pain is under control

If you have concerns about any of the above issues or any issue to do with your recovery, please speak to a member of the team.

On the day of discharge you will be given a GP letter from the ward nurses, or a copy will be sent electronically to your GP if you are a Coventry patient. This letter has information about your tablets, your outpatient appointments and includes a section about any referrals that may have been made for you, such as to District Nurses.

Medication

If you require tablets, you will be given up to a fourteen day supply before leaving hospital. The ward nurse will explain to you what they are and how you should take them. Following pancreatic surgery, most patients will also take home some injections to prevent clots. You or a carer, such as



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one of your family members, will need to give these injections to you on a daily basis. If you have any concerns about this please discuss them with the ward nurses prior to your discharge.

Wounds

If your clips/stitches have not been removed before going home, or if you still have a wound that needs a nurse to care for, the ward nurses will either arrange for a district nurse or you may be asked to make an appointment with the GP practices' nurse. **Make sure you know what the plan is before going home.**

The ward nurses will need to provide you with any necessary dressings to take home for your practice nurse or the district nurse.

If your wound has staples the nurses in the community or at the GP surgery will need a special tool to remove them. The ward will provide you with this prior to discharge. If you are not given the tool to remove the staples or are having issues booking an appointment to have your staples/stitches or wound reviewed please contact the HPB clinical nurse specialist.

If your wounds are healed, we would ask you to observe them regularly. Please look out for any of the following:

- increased pain or tenderness
- increased swelling or opening of the wound
- redness or warmth around the wound
- if you have a temperature of above 38°C

If you see notice any of the above symptoms, a wound infection may be developing. You may need antibiotics, so please contact your GP or let the clinical nurse specialist know.

When bathing or showering, **do not** rub the incision site. Instead, let the soapy water run over it. Avoid using scented soap or sprays near the wound site until healed, as this may cause irritation.

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Pain

It is normal to have some pain around the wound after your return home. The doctor will order some pain killers to take home with you. Take these as directed and if necessary obtain a repeat prescription from your GP.

Activities

- Listen to your body and be aware of its limitations. Exercise gently and build up gradually to resume your normal life style.
- Avoid heavy lifting with in the first six weeks.
- Check with your doctor before resuming driving. We recommend you wait at least six weeks.
- Rest if you feel tired.
- Do not feel ashamed if you need to rest or sleep during the day as this is quite normal.

Please continue wearing the support socks until you are fully mobile and taking daily walks. On average this will be for 4-6 weeks.

Nutritional support

Eat what appeals to you when you get home. Try to eat a well balanced diet with protein, fruits, bread, milk and vegetables. **Do not** skip meals. Eat small, frequent meals and try to include an evening snack.

You may need to check your blood sugar. This will tell you that the pancreas is still able to produce insulin. If you have any of the following symptoms contact us or your GP:

- increased thirst
- fatigue
- frequent urination
- light headed or dizziness

If you find you are opening your bowels frequently or losing weight, or both, please contact us as you may require tablets that replace the digestive enzymes that are produced by your pancreas. These tablets are known as **Creon**. If you are already taking these tablets, it is important to

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take these tablets as directed so your body can break down and absorb the food you eat.

If you have any of the above symptoms please contact the clinical nurse specialist or dietician who will advise you on what to do.

Follow-up appointments

The clinical nurse specialist (CNS) will contact you within 4-6 days of your discharge to see how you are progressing. You will be seen by the HPB surgeon or a member of the CNS team 3 weeks after your discharge date to talk about your results. Further follow up will continue at 3 monthly intervals with the CNS team if appropriate.

If you have a confirmed cancer, you will require a further follow up with your cancer specialist (oncologist) to see if you require chemotherapy treatment. This will be requested at your 3 week follow up appointment after being discharged.

If you have any problems at any time, appointments are always available at the outpatient clinics or with your clinical nurse specialist. Their contact details are 024 7696 5618 (Claire Pearce, Michelle Faupel and Jamie Bradley).

Support once at home

When you leave hospital you may come across problems that you or your family need to talk to someone about. You may feel anxious and that you have been cut off from the hospital team. These feelings are normal.

There are several ways that you can contact the hospital team:

Ring the **clinical nurse specialist: 024 7696 5618 (Claire Pearce, Michelle Faupel and Jamie Bradley).**

Ring the **ward you were discharged from** via the hospital switchboard: **024 7696 4000** or attend **ward 22 SAU** (Surgical Assessment Unit).

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The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 5618 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

To give feedback on this leaflet please email feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk

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