

Upper Gastro Intestinal

Going home after gastric (stomach) surgery

You have now recovered enough from your operation to start thinking about going home. The aim of this information sheet is to help you to overcome 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.

If you have concerns about any issues about your recovery, including those above, please speak to a member of the Nursing or Medical team.

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

Medication

If you require tablets, you will be given a seven-day supply before leaving hospital. The ward nurse will explain to you what they are and how you should take them.

Wounds

If your clips/stitches have not been removed before going home the ward nurses may ask you to go to your GP practice to have them removed or arrange for a district nurse to visit.



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If you still have a wound that needs a nurse to redress it, the ward nurses will arrange for a district nurse to visit you at home.

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 degrees C

Any of these signs may indicate the possibility of a wound infection developing and you may need antibiotics so please contact your GP or let the Nurse Specialist know.

When bathing or showering **do not rub** the incision site just let the soapy water run over it. Try to avoid putting perfumed/scented soap or sprays near the wound site until it has fully healed, as this may cause irritation.

Feeding tube

If you have a feeding tube please note that the external stitch around the tube will need to be removed by your practice nurse or district nurse 14 days after surgery.

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 your limitations. Take gentle exercise and build up gradually to resume your normal life style

- Avoid heavy lifting with in the first six weeks.
- Check with your doctor before you resume driving
- Rest if you feel tired
- Do not be feel ashamed if you need to rest or sleep during the day as this is quite normal

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- Keep your anti-embolic stockings on until you are fully active

Nutritional support

The Macmillan Dietitian will come to see you before your discharge to give advice on the appropriate diet after your surgery

If you have had a gastric wedge resection this may not be necessary and the surgeon will likely encourage you just to build back up to your normal diet.

Vitamin B12 injections

If you have had a Total Gastrectomy (removal of **all** of the stomach), you will require 3 monthly Vitamin B12 injections for life. These will need to be arranged through your GP. The first injection will need to be given 3 months following discharge from hospital.

Blood thinning injections

These will need to be continued for up to 28 days from the date of surgery. You or your carer will be taught how to give these before you are discharged or alternatively, a District Nurse will be arranged to give them.

Follow-up appointments

The Clinical Nurse Specialist will contact you within 4 days of your discharge

If you have any problems at any time, appointments are always available at the Outpatient clinics or with your Clinical Nurse Specialist.

Arrangements will be made for you to be seen in clinic by the Clinical Nurse Specialist and Dietitian within three to four weeks of discharge. This clinic runs on a Monday afternoon.

Your Consultant will see you within 6-8 weeks of your discharge.

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

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have been cut off from the hospital team. These feelings are normal and you can still access the hospital team by contacting:

Clinical Nurse Specialists: Tel. 024 7696 6475

Or

The ward from which you were discharged:

Ward 20 Tel. 024 7696 5557

Ward 21 Tel. 024 7696 5774

Ward 22 ECU: Tel. 024 7696 5756

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 6475 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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