Bariatric Surgery
Positive changes for positive health
Discharge advice for patients

York Obesity Surgical Department
The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

ℹ️ For more information, please see contact numbers on page 10

Caring with pride
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Leaving hospital following bariatric surgery can be a bit daunting. You have lots of changes to make and lots of things to remember. We hope you find these notes of help.

**Travelling Home**

Ideally, you will be going home by car. If so and it is a long journey, try to stop every hour so you can stretch your legs. Otherwise, you may feel stiff when you arrive home. It is also advisable to use a folded towel or small cushion/pillow you can place between your lap and seatbelt strap. This will help protect your abdomen should you have to stop in a hurry. You may also want to have a drink with you as well.

**When can I drive?**

You should be able to drive six to eight weeks after your surgery. You need to be able to wear your seatbelt comfortably and be able to safely perform an emergency stop before you do. We would also suggest you double check your insurance cover just in case it stipulates instructions.
My Wound

If you have had open surgery then you will have both skin staples and tension sutures. The sutures will be removed seven days after surgery and the skin staples 14 days after surgery. If your wound becomes red or hot to touch or you see it discharging any fluid, especially thick, sometimes smelly fluid we want you to contact us and/or see your GP to look at your wound in case it has become infected. It is possible you may require antibiotics.

We will provide you with the required equipment for your District Nurse or Practice Nurse (suture removal pack/staple removers) to remove the sutures and skin clips. Sometimes you may see a small amount of straw-coloured fluid come from around the skin clips as they are removed. This is nothing to be concerned about as the fluid is very much like what a blister contains. You may however require a dressing to place over the wound so no staining of clothes can occur.
If you have had Laparoscopic (keyhole) surgery your discharging nurse will have explained the care required. If you are at all worried or confused please contact David Locker on the number at the end of this booklet.

If your wound becomes red or hot to touch or you see it discharging any fluid, especially thick, sometimes smelly fluid we want you to contact us and/or see your GP, in case it has become infected. It is possible you may require antibiotics.

After a couple of weeks it is not uncommon following open surgery to have some discomfort under the rib cage on either or both sides. This is due to the retraction during surgery. This will settle with time and can be eased with normal painkillers. However, if you are worried, contact us.

**My Diet**

Please follow the guidelines and information you have already received by the Dietitian. If you have any concerns or worries please contact us. Dietary changes are often difficult to begin with. Food intolerances are also common and taste often changes. If you eat something which disagrees with you, please don’t persist with it. Try it again a few weeks later. If nausea is a problem or you vomit, please contact us to discuss things. Be sensible, things can be tough to begin with but they do get easier.
You and Your Weight-loss

After having weight-loss surgery, it is all too tempting to get on the scales every day, **please don’t**. Aim to weigh yourself once or twice a month, weekly at the very most.

Everyone’s weight-loss will vary; remember you are an individual so try not to compare yourself to others, no matter how tempting it is.

People can lose six to 18kg (one to three stone) over the first couple of months. After that, it is between three and six kilograms (a half to one stone) a month however, this is surgery and person specific.

Don’t worry if your weight loss slows in the third month. This is common and we are not sure why but it will pick up again. The key is to not get disheartened.

The weight-loss in the second six months after surgery will be roughly half of what you lose in the first six months after your surgery. But please remember that these are averages not absolutes.
Mobility and Exercise

It is very important that you stay mobile at home, potter about doing little and often. Avoid heavy lifting or anything excessive for about six weeks. Perhaps do some walking twice a day within your limits. Little and often will build up your stamina. Keeping mobile after surgery also reduces the risk of developing blood clots (Deep Vein Thrombosis or Pulmonary Embolism). You should be wearing your hospital stockings for six weeks after surgery if you wore them in hospital. You will also have a daily injection of Fragmin; you should have this every day for 28 days after your surgery. For example if you go home on day five you will have 24 days left.

After about six to eight weeks, you should be able to get started on a regular exercise programme. It does not matter what you do. You could do swimming or aqua aerobics (as long as all wounds are fully healed), cycling or walking. Try to do 30 minutes of regular exercise three times per week. You could join a gym, but avoid strenuous abdominal wall exercises for first three months. You will be surprised how quickly your ability to do some exercise will improve, as will your energy levels. Doing exercise will not only improve energy and fitness it will also help to reduce high blood pressure, cholesterol and perhaps aid loose skin. It may also improve your self-confidence and well-being. Doing regular exercise is not just a short-term thing after surgery it’s a lifestyle change to help in keeping your weight off long term. Go on, give it a go.
My Medications

Medications can be a confusing issue. Whilst in hospital we will have already told you if you no longer need to take a medication, which you were taking prior to your surgery. If you are unsure, please contact us.

Short-term items: You will probably go home with some painkillers. This is often paracetamol with either codeine or tramadol. These will only be a short-term item as you get over your surgery. The ward staff should have gone through the instructions of taking these medications with you before discharge, they will also be on the boxes. If you are worried or need advice, call us.

Long-term items: You will however be on certain medications or supplements for life.
For the Gastric bypass and Sleeve Gastrectomy patient, you will be discharged on the following:

- Multivitamin – such as Bassett’s chewable or Forceval once a day. The dietitian will have discussed these with you.

- Adcal D3 – this is the Vitamin D and Calcium supplement. This is once a day unless we instruct you otherwise. Try not to take at the same time as your Ferrous Fumerate.

- Ferrous Fumerate – this is an iron supplement and is taken twice a day.

- Vitamin B12 – this is an injection every three months and is requested to be given by your GP practice.

- Lansoprazole (gastric bypass patient only unless stated by the team) - this is a medication which reduces the acid production in your stomach and this is taken once a day.
What happens next and who can I contact if I have a problem?

Contacts and staying in touch is very important. A week after discharge you will be contacted by the dietitian. Four weeks after discharge, you will have your first clinic appointment. This will be with the dietitian. Six to eight weeks after surgery, you will see your surgeon. Your ongoing follow-ups will be arranged at each appointment. However if you are concerned about something or need to ask a question related to your surgery please contact us.

Here are some useful numbers and emails:

David Locker, Bariatric Surgical Nurse Practitioner.
Telephone: 01904 721195
Email: David.Locker@york.nhs.uk

Aimee Newton, Dietician.
Telephone: 01904 725269
Email: Aimee.Newton@york.nhs.uk

Pam Hallinan, Mr Giles and Mr Wong’s secretary
Telephone: 01904 725968

Louise Thresh, Mr Miller and Mr Krishnan’s secretary
Telephone: 01904 725523

Don’t forget the YORK BARIATRIC SUPPORT GROUP. If you need dates contact David Locker on the above contact details.
Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact: David Locker, Bariatric Surgical Nurse Practitioner, The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or telephone 01904 721195.

Teaching, training, and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training, and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email pals@york.nhs.uk.

An answer phone is available out of hours.
Providing care together in York, Scarborough, Bridlington, Malton, Selby and Easingwold communities

Please telephone or email if you require this information in a different language or format

01904 725566
email: access@york.nhs.uk

Braille Audio e.g. CD
Large print Electronic

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