

# Major trauma patient information

## Trauma and Orthopaedics

### Introduction

The information contained within this booklet is for people who have recently been admitted to hospital after trauma or injury. It is intended to support the information and advice that you will be given by different health professionals during your hospital stay. There is often a lot of information to remember, so this guide contains reference information and the contact details of organisations that can provide support to yourself, family, friends and carers after you leave St. George's Hospital.

### Who will be involved in your care?

Patients admitted to St. George's Hospital following major trauma (multiple, serious injuries) are cared for by doctors from a variety of specialities including:

- Orthopaedics
- Plastics
- General surgery
- Neurosurgery

It will depend on the nature of the injuries.

Rehabilitation can begin as soon as you start to recover. It aims to improve the speed of recovery and address any difficulties you may have. The type and amount of therapy required is dependant on your individual needs and the type of injuries sustained. The rehabilitation process is co-ordinated by a multidisciplinary team; you may meet some of the professionals explained below.

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- **Acute pain specialists**

This is a team of doctors and nurses who specialise in the management of pain relief. They will be available to give advice on all aspects of your pain management, and will adjust your medications as you recover.

- **Chaplaincy / counsellor** (telephone: 020 8725 3070)

We recognise that some people need to talk about the event that has brought them into hospital. For some this event clouds everything else that the team are doing to aid recovery. We are here to listen, reassure and give you some guidance through the situation, regardless of your faith or beliefs. We can also support your relatives and friends as they may have to make changes in their lives because of what has happened to you.

- **Dietician** (telephone: 020 8725 0518)

The dietician is concerned with ensuring that your dietary requirements are met because nutrition is an essential part of recovering from an injury. The aim is to:

- help with the healing of wounds and injuries
- minimise weight loss
- ensure that you receive all the important vitamins and minerals to fight infections.

The dietician will work with other members of the healthcare team to identify people who might need their help. You may be given high protein and high calorie (energy) nutritional supplements or via 'tube' feeds. In the case of swallowing difficulties the dietician will work closely with the speech and language therapist to arrange liquidised or pureed meals, which may be easier to manage. Should longer term nutrition support be required, the dietician will arrange referral to the appropriate community teams.

- **Doctors**

The doctors are involved continuously with your care in the early stages. During the later stages of rehabilitation, you will have less direct contact with medical staff than previously. However, you will remain under the care of a consultant.

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- **Nurses**

Ward based nurses are available to provide 24-hour care while you are receiving treatment in hospital. They will assist with medication, meals, personal care and transfers if help is required. The nurses work closely with the therapy team to promote independence, and will encourage you to try to do as much as possible for yourself.

- **Occupational therapists** (telephone: 020 8725 0985)

The occupational therapists (OT) help people of all ages who have physical, mental or social problems as a result of accident, illness or ageing, to do the things they want to do. This could be the daily activities that many of us take for granted, from grocery shopping or brushing your teeth, to more complex activities such as caring for children, succeeding in studies or work, or maintaining a healthy social life. In hospital, the focus of OT is to regain independence in the most basic activities, such as having a shower, getting dressed or preparing a drink. They will also discuss your home environment to help address any needs or concerns you may have prior to discharge from hospital.

- **Pharmacist** (Medicines Information Line: 020 8725 1033)

The pharmacist is based on the ward to ensure that you get the best from your medicines. You will meet them at an early stage to discuss your medications. The pharmacist will liaise with the doctors to ensure that all medicines prescribed are suitable for your needs, for example, ensuring your pain and bowels are managed correctly. As the expert in medicines, they are available for help and advice to all the hospital team and of course yourself, so feel free to ask them anything about your medications. On discharge the pharmacy team will provide enough of your medications to last you two weeks at home. You will need to get future prescriptions from your GP.

- **Physiotherapist** (telephone: 020 8725 3225)

The physiotherapists may be involved from a very early stage, helping with the management of chest problems and positioning. As recovery progresses, the physiotherapist will carry out a thorough assessment and devise a treatment programme appropriate to your needs. This aims to facilitate activity and help you achieve as much independent function as possible within your own limits.

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- **Speech and language therapist**

The speech and language therapists (SLT) are involved with the assessment and treatment of communication and swallowing difficulties. They are able to provide information and support around communication disorders and will work to maximise effective communication for the individual. This will include all aspects of communication:

- voice
- spoken expression
- speech production
- comprehension (understanding)
- reading and writing
- social skills.

A SLT is also skilled in managing swallowing problems and will advise on safe eating and drinking.

- **Social Worker**

Social workers are skilled in helping families receive the practical help that is needed. This may be on benefits, sick pay, accommodation, or advice on services that can help with counselling on emotions and feelings.

- **The Trauma Therapy Co-ordinator** (telephone: 020 9725 0103)

The trauma therapy co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that all the appropriate therapy teams are involved in your recovery both as a patient at St. George's Hospital and when you are discharged. They can provide advice and support for your relatives/friends throughout your stay at St. George's Hospital. You will be offered the chance to meet them to discuss your progress, future plans and any concerns you may have.

## **Other aspects of your care and recovery**

- **Pain Management:**

Pain is a normal response when you sustain an injury and also following surgery. It is important that measures are taken to control your pain as much as possible. During your hospital stay you will be prescribed medication to make sure that your pain is well controlled, and on discharge you may be given pain-relief medication. If you

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continue to find that pain is a problem once you are home, you should seek assistance from your GP who can provide support and advise as necessary.

- **Constipation/Bowel Management:**

Constipation (being unable to open your bowels regularly) can be a problem if you are not very mobile and if you are taking some pain medications. The following suggestions may help:

- Include plenty of high fibre foods including fruit, vegetables and cereals.
- Drink sufficient fluid with the aim to take 3 to 4 pints (8 to 10 cups) of total fluid per day.
- Move about as much as possible within your own limits.
- In hospital you will be offered laxatives if you need them. If you continue to have problems once you are home your GP can give you advice and prescribe laxatives if needed.

- **Emotional Support:**

Any hospital stay can be an extremely difficult time for you as a patient and also your family and friends. This can be made especially difficult when admission to hospital is following a traumatic event or circumstances beyond your control. During your hospital stay if you or your family members would like to speak to anyone about your situation, St. George's Hospital has a service which the nursing or therapy staff can access on your behalf which is run by the chaplaincy team. Many people find that during their hospital stay their immediate focus is on recovering from their physical injuries and do not have the need for emotional support until after being discharged from hospital. Some people may experience emotional problems, perhaps significant ones that are having an impact on their lives or relationships, following their experiences before and during their admission to hospital. If you feel the need for emotional support in order to resolve these issues you can access specialist support in the community through your GP, however long that may be after the event. Some support groups and charities can also provide advice.

- **Compensation / legal support:**

Whilst you are in hospital, claiming for compensation is likely to be the last thing on your mind. However, after the early stages you may begin to wonder if you may need help getting back to work, or learning to live independently. Compensation claims are

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dependent on the way the injury happened. Therefore not everyone will be entitled to compensation. You may wish to seek legal advice if your injury was caused by the following:

- road traffic collision
- at work
- through criminal assault.

The amount of compensation is not influenced by your speed of recovery so it is very important that you do participate in your rehabilitation so that you get the best outcome following your injuries.

For further information, contact the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) on 0870 606 2555 or at [www.sra.org.uk/consumers](http://www.sra.org.uk/consumers).

- **Return to work:**

Return to work will vary depending on the type of injuries that you have sustained, and also what activities your job involves. Your consultant will be able to provide guidance as to when you are able to return to work. Often a graduated return is recommended and this should be discussed directly with your employer. You will also need to consider how you will travel to and from your workplace.

If you are self-employed or decide to make a career change, the following agencies can provide guidance and support.

### **Benefits Enquiry Line**

Telephone: 0800 882200 (Monday to Friday 08.30 to 18.30 hours, Saturday 09.00 to 13.00 hours)

Website: [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

This Benefits Enquiry Line provides advice and information for disabled people and their carers on the range of benefits available to them.

### **Department for Employment and Learning**

Telephone: 0289 0257777 (Monday to Friday 09.00 to 17.00 hours)

Website: [www.delni.gov.uk](http://www.delni.gov.uk)

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The Department for Employment and Learning aims to promote learning and skill development, to prepare people for work and to support the UK economy.

### **Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)**

Telephone: via directory enquiries for your local branch.

Website: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

CAB can help people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free information and advice.

### **Return to hobbies / sport**

Return to activity will also vary depending on the type of injury and the level of activity that you wish to return to. Your consultant will be able to provide guidance when you attend your outpatient clinics.

### **Inclusive fitness**

Tel: 0114 257 2060

Website: [www.inclusivefitness.org](http://www.inclusivefitness.org)

Inclusive fitness is a programme supporting the fitness industry to become more inclusive. It caters for the needs of disabled and non-disabled people to increase participation in physical activities. The scheme is built around four key areas:

- accessible facilities
- inclusive fitness equipment
- staff training
- inclusive marketing strategies.

To find the closest inclusive fitness venue, access the website.

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## Useful contacts

(All details correct at time of printing)

### Equipment

#### British Red Cross

Telephone: 0844 871 11 11

Website: [www.redcross.org.uk](http://www.redcross.org.uk)

This is a volunteer-led organisation that helps people during difficult periods of their life. It has a medical equipment service which provides wheelchair hire and short term loans of equipment such as commodes and bath seats. Equipment is usually available within 24 hours and is loaned free of charge, although a refundable deposit may be required.

For further information contact your local Red Cross branch office.

#### National Mobility Rental

Telephone: 0870 423 2178

Website: [www.nationalmobilityhire.com](http://www.nationalmobilityhire.com)

National Mobility Hire offer long or short term hire solutions to your mobility needs and can provide wheelchairs with appropriate adaptations. They are a private company so there is a cost for the equipment rental along with a £38 delivery + collection charge.

#### Wheel Freedom

Telephone: 0800 025 8005

Website: [www.wheelfreedom.com](http://www.wheelfreedom.com)

Wheel Freedom specialises in the provision of wheelchairs. They are a private company so there is a cost to hire equipment along with a £29.99 delivery + collection charge. They are unable to supply recliner wheelchairs.

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## **Direct Mobility Hire**

Telephone: 020 8370 7888

Website: [www.directmobility.co.uk](http://www.directmobility.co.uk)

Direct Mobility Hire is a London based company who hire and sell mobility equipment hire for anyone with short or long-term needs. They are a private company so there is a cost to hire equipment along with a £20 delivery + collection charge.

## **Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA )**

Tel: 01792 783798

Address: DVLA

Medical Advisory Group

Longview Road

Swansea

SA99 1TU

All drivers are required by law to notify the DVLA of the onset, or worsening, of any medical condition that may affect their ability to drive safely. This is a legal requirement and is necessary for insurance cover; it is not optional. People who already have a driving licence are not usually required to take another test, but an assessment maybe required to determine the adaptations that are most suitable for you. If in doubt contact the DVLA. When you write to the DVLA for information the following details are required:

- full name
- date of birth
- driving licence number
- as much information about your medical condition as possible.

The DVLA will then contact you and give advice on any change to your licence and any time you may be required to stop driving. More information can be obtained in leaflet D100, which is available at your local post office.

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## **Forum of Mobility Centres**

Telephone: 0800 5593636 (Monday to Friday 09.00 to 17.00 hours)

Website: [www.mobility-centres.org.uk](http://www.mobility-centres.org.uk)

The Forum of Mobility Centres is a network of 17 independent organisations covering the UK. They offer information, advice and assessment to individuals who have a medical condition or are recovering from an accident or injury which may affect their ability to drive or access a motor vehicle. You can attend whichever centre is the most convenient for you. All centres offer advice and assessment to people who wish to begin, or return to driving following an illness, injury or accident. There is a charge for this service.

## **Support Groups**

### **Brake**

Tel: 01484 559909

Helpline: 0845 603 8570

Website: [www.brake.org.uk](http://www.brake.org.uk)

E-mail: [helpline@brake.org.uk](mailto:helpline@brake.org.uk)

Brake, the national road safety charity, works to stop death and injury on the roads and to care for people affected by road crashes. Brake also runs educational initiatives and campaigns for tougher laws against dangerous driving. Brake produces a range of support literature for people bereaved and injured at these particularly devastating times. Brake also runs a helpline, through which its highly trained operators can support families and friends following the aftermath of a road crash. The helpline provides both emotional and practical information. The helpline also acts as a signposting service directing callers to counselling services, trauma therapists, and self help groups.

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## **Support and Care After Road Death and Injury (SCARD)**

Tel: 0845 123 5542 (09.00 to 21.00 hours, 365 days a year)

Website: [www.scard.org.uk](http://www.scard.org.uk)

SCARD aims to help relieve distress among people who have been bereaved, injured or affected by road death or injury. They can provide emotional and practical support through a telephone helpline, support groups, meetings and personal support systems.

## **Headway**

Tel: 0808 800 2244

Website: [www.headway.org.uk](http://www.headway.org.uk)

E-mail: [helpline@headway.org.uk](mailto:helpline@headway.org.uk)

Headway, the brain injury association charity, aims to provide understanding of all aspects of brain injury and provide information, support and services to people with a brain injury, their family and carers.

## **Ilizarov Support Group**

Website: [www.ilizarov.org.uk](http://www.ilizarov.org.uk)

The Ilizarov and External Fixator Wearer's Support Group offers mainly web-based support. The aim of the website is to help answer any questions concerning the Ilizarov fixator and it is directed towards the following groups:

- People who are presently undergoing orthopaedic correction by Ilizarov fixator.
- People who are expecting orthopaedic surgery and the fitting of an Ilizarov fixator as part of this.
- People who may have an orthopaedic condition and who have never heard of the Ilizarov fixator and may like to discuss this with their consultant.

Visitors to the site should note the following: although primarily dealing with the Ilizarov fixator (through personal experience), the monolateral and other external fixators are also covered. The techniques that apply to living with the Ilizarov frame readily adapt to living with most external fixator systems.

## **Spinal Injuries Association (SIA)**

Tel: 0800 980 0501 (Monday to Friday 09.30 to 16.30 hours)

Website: [www.spinal.co.uk](http://www.spinal.co.uk)

The Spinal Injuries Association is a leading national charity for spinal cord injuries. It is a user led organisation and aims to offer support and assistance at time of injury and then throughout the rest of a spinal cord injured persons' life.

## **Victim Support**

Tel: 0845 3030900

Website: [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

Victim support is a national charity giving free and confidential help to victims of crime, witnesses, their family and friends and anyone else affected across England and Wales. It is not a government agency or part of the police and you do not have to report a crime to the police to get help. The volunteers at the group offer:

- someone to talk to
- information on police and court procedures
- help in dealing with other organisations
- information about compensation and insurance.

## **St George's Healthcare NHS Trust**

St George's Hospital, Blackshaw Road, London, SW17 0QT

Website: [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)

Telephone: 020 8672 1255



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