

Coming to the Day Surgery Unit

This leaflet provides information about coming in for your procedure at the Day Surgery Unit. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the doctor or nurse in charge of your care.

Please note that the cancellation of an operation is rare and will only happen in unexpected circumstances.

Between now and your admission, if you suffer any changes in your health or circumstances arise that stop you from attending for your planned surgery, please contact the telephone number on your admission letter.

Before coming into hospital

All patients who are booked to come into hospital for a day procedure or surgery are asked to plan and think about how you will manage while you are in hospital and when you first leave.

- Double check your letter to see where you will be having your operation.
- Make arrangements to travel to and from the hospital. You must be collected from the hospital and we recommend you travel home by car or taxi.
- Arrange for someone to stay with you for 24 hours after you have been discharged.
- Plan for any dependent relatives or your pets to be cared for while you are in hospital.

You are not required to take a swab test for COVID before your procedure however please call the Day Surgery Unit or the number on your admission letter as soon as possible if:

- you become ill
- you develop a cold, cough, sore throat, headache, flu, diarrhoea and vomiting
- you are unable to come in or change your mind about the procedure.

On the day of your appointment, please

- remove all make-up and nail varnish before your operation
- have a bath or shower and brush your teeth
- remove all jewellery (except for wedding rings) and body piercings. You can contact the Unit on **020 8725 0420** or **020 8725 0418** (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.30pm). We can rearrange your surgery if necessary and another patient can take your old appointment.

Items to bring with you

- Comfortable, loose clothes to wear after your operation
- Slippers and a dressing gown if you have one
- A pair of wide-fitting flat sandals or shoes if you are having leg or foot surgery
- Any medicines you are currently taking (in their original containers), plus any inhalers
- A container for contact lenses and dentures if you use them
- A book or magazine to read, headphones for music
- The phone number for a responsible adult who will be collecting you after your surgery.
- **You should not bring any valuables.**
- **Patients under 16 years old must be supervised by a parent or guardian.**
- **Please take your regular morning medication at its normal time (with water if you require it) unless you have been advised otherwise at your pre-operative assessment visit.**
- **Please do not smoke cigarettes or other nicotine products or chew gum on your day of surgery.**

How long will I wait?

We will give you regular updates regarding your estimated time of surgery but please be advised that you may need to wait for several hours. For this reason, we recommend that you bring a book, magazine, music or something else to help you pass the time. Sometimes another patient may require unexpected or very urgent surgery and it may be necessary to postpone your operation at the last minute. We will make every effort to avoid this wherever possible.

How can I prepare for my appointment at the DSU?

There are three key methods of anaesthesia used for patients undergoing surgery. These are:

1. General anaesthetic, which puts you to sleep for the duration of the surgery.
2. Sedation, which calms you and may cause you to have no memory of the procedure.
3. A local block (Regional Anaesthesia), where an injection of local anaesthetic temporarily cuts out any feeling in the area being operated on.
4. Local Anaesthesia where an injection of local anaesthesia is given at the site of the operation

Fasting or 'nil by mouth' instructions

When having an anaesthetic, you will be asked to fast (**stop eating and drinking**) for several hours before your surgery. It is essential for your safety that you follow the fasting instructions given to you.

Anaesthesia causes relaxation of the muscles of the stomach and throat, which normally stop food from going down into the lungs. Not following your fasting instructions properly can result in food coming up from your stomach and into your lungs, which can be very dangerous.

You must tell us if you have been unable to follow the fasting instructions given to you. It is extremely important that you follow the fasting instructions given below. Not following these instructions may mean that your surgery must be delayed or even cancelled.

For patients arriving at 7.30am

You must not eat any food or milky drinks including dairy alternatives after 2am on the morning of your surgery. Milk counts as a food product as it takes longer to digest. Fizzy drinks may also increase stomach acid and should be avoided on the morning of surgery.

Please continue to drink clear fluids from the list below until 7.30am:

- **Water (not fizzy)**
- **Dilute fruit squash / cordial (not squeezed fruit juice with pulp or 'bits' in it)**
- **Black tea (no milk or dairy alternatives) with or without sugar**
- **Black coffee (no milk or dairy alternatives) with or without sugar.**

Research has shown that drinking fluids up to one hour before surgery may reduce any feelings of hunger, feelings of sickness or likelihood of vomiting after surgery. It can also improve your recovery. For this reason, a nurse will give you a glass of water on arrival at the unit and our doctors / nurses may advise that you continue to take sips of water when they see you before your procedure.

For patients arriving at 11.30am

You may have an early breakfast before 7am on the morning of your surgery. You must not eat any food or drink milky drinks or milk alternative after this time. Milk counts as a food product as it takes longer to digest. Fizzy drinks may also increase stomach acid and should be avoided on the morning of surgery.

Please continue to drink clear fluids from the list below until 11.30am:

- **Water (not fizzy)**
- **Dilute fruit squash / cordial (not squeezed fruit juice with pulp or 'bits' in it)**
- **Black tea (no milk or milk alternatives) with or without sugar**
- **Black coffee (no milk or milk alternatives) with or without sugar.**

Research has shown that drinking fluids up to one hour before surgery may reduce any feelings of hunger, feelings of sickness or likelihood of vomiting after surgery. It can also improve your recovery. For this reason, a nurse will offer you water on arrival at the unit and our doctors may advise that you continue to take sips of water when they see you before your procedure.

What will happen on the day of my operation?

Please arrive at the time advised and go to the Day Surgery Unit reception. A member of staff will greet you and check your details before taking your temperature, pulse and blood pressure.

Please note that both women and men are treated in the Day Surgery Unit. Lockers and changing facilities will always be separate although the recovery area after your operation will be common.

Asking for your consent

Your surgeon and your anaesthetist will see you before the operation and explain the procedure in full. They will ask you to sign a consent form to confirm that you have understood what the procedure entails and that you are happy to go ahead with it. (This is a good time for you to ask any outstanding questions that you may have). You will be given a hospital gown to change into and a practitioner will double check your personal details before escorting you to the operating theatre.

You can withdraw your consent at any time, even if you have said 'yes' previously. If you would like more details about our consent process, please ask for a copy of our policy.

What will happen after my operation?

If you have had a general anaesthetic, you will wake up in the recovery room of the Day Surgery Unit. Depending on the operation you have had, you may have some tubes or monitors attached to you. You can have light snacks when you are awake and alert. You will be assessed by your practitioner, who will advise when s/he feels that you are sufficiently recovered.

Pain Management: You will be given painkillers (if needed) and any other medicines to take home with you. For some procedures, you may not be given any painkillers, so please keep a supply of your usual painkillers (paracetamol and ibuprofen) at home for use when the anaesthetic starts to wear off. Some patients are sensitive to ibuprofen therefore please discuss with the pharmacist before purchase.

It is important to arrange for a responsible adult to take you home and stay with you for 24 hours following your operation. This should be arranged before you come into hospital. We will call and inform them when to

come and take you home. Please note this is needed for all types of anaesthesia except local anaesthesia. Let the unit or pathway coordinator know if this is not possible.

You will also be given advice and written information about the care of any surgical wounds. If you have stitches, these can be removed later by your GP or you may be given an outpatient appointment to have them removed. If you need to see a community or practice nurse, you will be given details of how to arrange this.

A letter about your hospital treatment will be sent to your GP and you will be given a copy of this letter when you leave the unit. Once you are at home, you can go back to eating and drinking normally. It is advisable to rest and give yourself time to get over the operation.

Extended recovery

Day Surgery Unit provides a specialised extended recovery and we discharge patients until 11pm. A few patients will need care for longer and will be required to stay overnight. When you have fully recovered, a senior nurse will discharge you according to your doctor's instructions and discharge criteria before 8am.

The discharging nurse can discuss, plan your discharge and is able to assist with any concerns you or your carer may have.

The unit specialises in the care of patients who have had surgery which require one night stay before going home.

For the first 24 hours after leaving the hospital do not

- drive, operate machinery, use a cooker, ride a bicycle, sign a legal document or engage in any activity requiring skill or judgement
- take sleeping tablets
- drink alcohol.

Contact us

Please note that after you have left hospital, most concerns can be managed by your GP. However, for urgent advice within 24 hours of your procedure please contact the Day Surgery Unit on **020 8725 0418 / 0434** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 8.30pm).

For urgent enquiries outside of these hours, please contact your GP or attend your local emergency department (A&E).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm

Friday between 10am and 2pm.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing.

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency.

NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching

'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk).

The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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