

# Paediatric Major Trauma Service Going Home

## Family information leaflet

**This booklet is designed to provide some information to help you and your child prepare for discharge home or to another healthcare provider, such as a local hospital or rehabilitation service. Please ask any member of staff if you need more information or if you are not sure about anything.**

## Leaving the hospital

When you and your child first get home, it is normal to feel tired and overwhelmed. Other care givers or family may be feeling a range of emotions too. Take time to talk and share this leaflet with them.

Recovery as a process can take weeks to months, rather than days. It can take time to get back to a normal routine. Sleep patterns, appetite, pain control, usual activities and confidence can all be affected and may seem slow to return to usual.

You will be given a two week supply of medicines on discharge. Contact your GP for any repeat prescriptions so you do not run out. You can always discuss the need for additional pain relief or general advice with your GP.

## Looking after your child's wound

Dressings do not need to be changed every day as this increases the risk of infection. You may need to see a practice nurse a few days after discharge for a wound check and dressing change or your child may have this done at a clinic appointment. These instructions should be given to you before you leave the hospital.

If the wound becomes painful, red, swollen or has increased discharge, you should take your child to see their practice nurse or GP sooner.

Your child can have a bath or a shower if able unless you have been told otherwise on discharge. If your child has a plaster cast or dressing it must be protected to stop it getting wet. You can get waterproof covers for plaster casts from different suppliers including Limbo: [www.limboproducts.co.uk](http://www.limboproducts.co.uk) Tel: 01243 573417

When the dressings have been removed you can wash your child's wound gently with soap and water and pat dry – do not scrub. Once healed, you can moisturise and massage any scars with E45 or similar unscented, simple cream to improve healing and appearance.

## Will my child be in pain?

It is recommended you continue to give your child regular pain relief (analgesia) when you go home to help manage pain. Pain is easier to manage when pain medicines are taken regularly and then gradually reduced over a few days to weeks rather than stopping suddenly.

The ward nurse will go through which medicines you should give at home. This may include a combination of medicines which should be given regularly and other medicines to be given only as needed – for example at bedtime or before a certain activity.

Do not wait for your child to be in severe pain or discomfort before giving pain relief. Paracetamol and ibuprofen work most effectively if given at regular intervals throughout the day. Ibuprofen should be given with food. These medicines come in different forms, e.g. tablet, liquid, or suppository – you can choose the best option for your child.

Dihydrocodeine is a stronger pain medicine which can be given up to four times a day. Your child may need to take a laxative when they are taking this medicine.

**If you are concerned that your child is in more pain or the pain medicines are not working effectively, you should speak with your GP or if the pain is extreme, you should bring your child to the nearest emergency department (A&E).**

## When can my child get back to normal activities?

Returning home after a hospital stay for traumatic injuries can be a big step in the journey of recovery and normal daily life can feel like a big challenge. We recommend maintaining activities and exercises provided by the therapy teams in hospital and slowly building on this when your child goes home. Add in short tasks and give your child regular breaks to build back up to a more regular routine. Please liaise with your child's school or care setting if applicable to gain more support with doing this.

Your child may be given a rehabilitation prescription, which identifies their continuing physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language requirements or goals to maintain progress at home. It might be given to you separately or be included in their discharge paperwork. This document is also important for any community teams who are taking over rehabilitation care and will contain details of any equipment that has been supplied or is required for your child to regain as much independence as possible. We will refer to your local community teams as required as part of planning for your child's safe discharge home.

## What should I do if my child has a problem?

Your GP will be able to deal with most issues and can refer you to a range of services if needed. Your GP practice nurse will look after wound care including removal of sutures (stitches) or clips (staples) and can help with a range of other issues. If you can't get to your GP surgery, district nurses can provide this care in your home.

If your child goes home with a **plaster cast**, you should have the plaster checked if it feels too tight and they have a lot of swelling in the fingers or toes and if the fingers or toes are pale, blue or cold or feel tingly or numb.

**Contact the major trauma nurses on 020 8725 2363 (Monday to Friday 7.30 am to 5.30pm) or the plaster room on 020 8725 3039 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 3pm). Outside of these hours, go to your nearest Emergency Department (ED or A&E).**

**See your GP or call NHS 111 urgently** if your child has any of the following symptoms, as they may suggest a wound infection:

- Heat
- Redness
- Swelling
- Pain
- Discharge
- Fever
- Feeling generally unwell.

## Will my child have a follow-up appointment?

Your child may need follow-up for their injuries. If you have any questions when you get home or do not receive the follow-up appointments you were expecting, then please contact the major trauma nurse practitioners on 020 8725 2363 or email [major.traumanurses@nhs.net](mailto:major.traumanurses@nhs.net)

The children's psychology team may offer you and your child support once you have been discharged, including signposting to community services.

## Checklist for going home

Please discuss any questions or concerns with the major trauma nurses or ward staff before going home. Here are some questions you might need to think about before you leave:

Have you been given a copy of the rehabilitation plan?

Do you know your weight bearing status, timeframes and any precautions related to your child's injuries?

If your child has a collar, brace or splint do you know how to look after them?

Is all the equipment in place that you need to manage at home? (you will have been advised what is required by your Occupational Therapist)

Medicines – do you know what each are and when/how to give them to your child?

Do you have a letter from the hospital to give to your child's GP?

(This is a discharge summary explaining what has happened to your child, what treatments your child has had and what medications and follow up they need (some are sent electronically – please ask the ward staff)

Do you know which teams will be following up your care as an outpatient?

If your child has an unhealed wound, do you know what follow up care is needed?

## Useful sources of information

### Major Trauma Signposting service (MTSP)

The St George's MTSP service includes:

- **a rehabilitation coordinator**, who can give advice about any relevant **legal and compensation process** and how it may support your child's rehabilitation. The rehabilitation coordinator can give you advice during your child's stay at St George's Hospital or after discharge. They will try to answer any queries you or your family have. You can contact them on 03300 439879 or by email on [mtsp@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:mtsp@stgeorges.nhs.uk)
- **Citizen's Advice**, who can give advice on issues such as welfare benefit entitlement during your child's recovery, debt and finance, housing, employment, immigration, and power of attorney. The service is available to all major trauma patients and their family and is entirely confidential. Citizen's Advice can be contacted on 03300 439879 or email [mtsp@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:mtsp@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

## Parking and travel

You may be able to get a Blue Badge to help you and your child get out and about while recovering. To check if you are eligible and apply for a Blue Badge, contact your local council or go online: [www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge](http://www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge)

For more information and guidance, visit:

[Applying for a Blue Badge - Citizens Advice](#)

## Contact us

**If you have any questions or concerns about going home after your stay at St George's major trauma centre, please contact the major trauma nurse specialists on 020 8725 2363 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm).**

You can also email us at [major.traumanurses@nhs.net](mailto:major.traumanurses@nhs.net)

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

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## 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.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.  
Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

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

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### **NHS UK**

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

**Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://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](http://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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