

PATIENT INFORMATION

Laparoscopic Splenectomy

Discharge Advice

1 .Most patients experience some pain or discomfort around the wounds and lower abdomen which is relieved by taking painkillers.

You will be given painkillers to take home, it is important that you take these regularly e.g. take them with your breakfast, lunch, and dinner and before you go to bed.

Please follow the instructions on the boxes and do not exceed the recommended dose. If your pain is severe (score 10) and you have taken your painkillers and the pain lasts for more than 2 hours at severe level please return to A&E so that we can examine you.

An easy way of understanding your pain score is on a scoring system called a pain ruler of 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10. When you leave hospital it should be about 3-4, some patients have discomfort only.

0 = no pain ----- 10 is severe pain.

2. It is usual to feel tired following your operation, do not worry. This will gradually decrease. Build up gradually to your normal routine. Avoid heavy lifting for 4 weeks

Remember everyone is different!

Returning to work will depend on your job. If your work does not involve heavy lifting, standing or walking for long periods then you may feel up to going back after 2 weeks. If your work is heavy then it is likely you will need to take 4 weeks off.

3. Your wounds have been closed with dissolvable stitches; they will be absorbed between 3 and 6 weeks. Glue, has also been used to close the wounds, this will form a scab over the wound. Do not scratch the scab off; it will fall off on its own. Occasionally you may have marked bruising around your wounds. Do not worry they will disappear after a couple of weeks.

Please make an appointment with your practice nurse at your doctor's surgery if you are at all worried about your wounds.

You can take a shower after 24 hours.

4. Do not drive until you are able to move freely without any discomfort and are safe to do perform an emergency stop. Please inform your insurance company about your operation before you return to driving to avoid invalidating your insurance.

5. You may suffer from constipation; this is common if you are on strong painkillers. Please take a laxative e.g. Lactulose, Fybogel, or Sennakot which can be purchased from your local pharmacist.

6. Sexual activities can be resumed as soon as you feel comfortable.

7. Please continue to take your normal medication unless otherwise advised from a health professional.

8. Some people are discharged with a drain in place. If this is the case, you will be given more information on how to look after the drain and the plan will be explained before you are discharged.

9. Your spleen is part of your immune system which helps to protect you from infection; therefore, after a splenectomy you may require lifelong antibiotics and some vaccinations. Vaccinations are usually given 2 weeks before surgery (if you know the date of your surgery) or 2 weeks after surgery (if performed as an emergency).

Vaccinations are given to protect against:

Pneumococcus – this germ (bacterium) is a common cause of chest infections but can also lead to blood poisoning (septicaemia).

Hib (Haemophilus Influenzae type b) – This bacterium can cause chest infections and meningitis and also lead to septicaemia. This vaccination is now routine for children but adults may not have had it.

Meningioccoccus – This can cause meningitis and lead to septicaemia. Having the meningioccocal ACWY conjugate vaccine as well as the Hib vaccine will protect you from many of the strains of meningitis.

Flu (Influenza) - An annual flu vaccine in autumn is recommended. The spleen does not fight the flu virus but some people go on to develop secondary chest infections/pneumonia so it is beneficial to be protected against the flu.

Your GP will be able to give information on any future boosters that may be required. Take care when travelling abroad to ensure you are protected against disease by discussing recommended vaccinations with your GP.

Take care to avoid animal bites and scratches.

10. We encourage you to carry a card/bracelet/pendant to alert health professionals of your risk of infection in case of emergencies.

If you are at all concerned, contact **Maxine Chaplen/Jan Spacagna/Louise McGovern Laparoscopic Nurse Practitioners between the hours of 08.00-17.30 Monday to Friday. Tel 01803 654792** or bleep her through the hospital switchboard (01803 614567), ask for bleep 414.

If it is out of hours and an emergency please return to the hospital. Or ask the switchboard to bleep 110 and you will be able to speak to a professional nurse for advice

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.