

Patient information

General information about your surgical experience (Main hospital)

Please read the following instructions carefully before your operation.

Failure to follow this advice could lead to the cancellation of your operation.

Your operation is planned to take place in the main hospital.

Nil by mouth instructions will be sent to you by the admissions office when you are allocated a date for surgery. Being nil by mouth also includes not chewing any gum. If you have any concerns about any of the instructions on your letter please phone the Pre-Admission Unit team:

Monday to Friday between the hours of 8.30am to 5.30pm on **(01284) 712810**.

Further information can be found on the Pre-Admission Unit link on the West Suffolk Hospital web page.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you follow any instructions which were given to you in the Pre-Admission Unit about any medication changes prior to your operation.

Before your operation

If you are having a planned anaesthetic, you will hear from the pre-assessment unit beforehand. You may have already had this appointment.

It is important to bring information about your medical conditions and a list of any medications that you take to this appointment. You may want to bring another person with you as these appointments may involve being given a lot of information.

Nurses at the clinic will meet with you, ask about you and your medical conditions. They will check some basic measurements and may do other investigations such as blood tests, ECG and lung function tests.

You may meet with an anaesthetic doctor as well as the pre-assessment nurse, or at a separate appointment. That anaesthetist won't necessarily be your anaesthetist on the day of surgery, but they will be in close communication with them.

Preparation you can do for your operation:

If you have not had a recent medication check at your GP, consider booking an appointment to review the control of your other conditions such as diabetes and hypertension. This can help prevent delays to your operation.

Keeping physically active as much as possible in the lead up to your operation as this will help with the recovery.

Keep good dental hygiene is believed to be important in reducing the risk of infection.

Do not smoke or use recreational drugs for 12 hours prior to your operation.

Do not drink alcohol for 24 hours prior to your operation.

Please bath or shower on the morning of your operation. You may be given an antiseptic wash to help with the risk of infection depending on the procedure.

Please help us to help you

Where possible wear only a wedding ring. If you have other jewellery that you cannot remove, then please let the staff on the ward and the theatre team know. Be conscious that heavy makeup and accessories such as false nails and eyelashes may hinder effective monitoring and could be damaged during anaesthesia.

Do not bring any unnecessary money in with you but you may wish to bring small change for newspapers etc.

Please wear glasses rather than contact lenses and if you use hearing aids, do wear these.

Please wear comfortable, supportive footwear.

Remember to bring the following with you

Any drugs or medicines in their original containers. As medications are not individually labelled in a Dossett box, our ward nurses are unable to administer these to you whilst you are in the hospital.

Any medical devices eg inhalers or CPAP machines you are using.

Dressing gown and slippers.

Something to read or something to do whilst in the hospital. This will help you to cope with the natural anxiety surrounding an operation.

The telephone number of the person responsible for taking you home.

What will happen on the day?

When you arrive on the ward you will be booked in at their reception area.

The Nursing staff will help prepare you for your operation, they will show you to the area where you will wait for the operation and to your bedspace. The nursing staff will explain to you how to get ready for the operating theatre.

You will meet a member of the surgical team and a member of the anaesthetic team prior to having your operation. This is an opportunity to run over the options for your treatment once more. Even if you have previously signed a consent form, you are able to withdraw consent or ask for more information at any time.

You may be asked to sign a consent form if you have not already done so. You will be asked to check your consent form if you have already completed this online.

The hospital has several theatres. People are collected from the ward dependant on their needs, the type of operation they are having and which theatre list they are allocated to. It may be that people who arrived after you go to theatre before you. Please be advised you will have to wait until it is your turn for theatre.

You will find that you are asked the same questions more than once; this is all part of the careful checking system ensuring that we get the right patient, for the right procedure at the right time.

More information about your anaesthetic team

Your anaesthetic on the day will be provided by either an anaesthetist or anaesthesia associate, assisted by either an operating department practitioner or an anaesthetic nurse. Both anaesthesia associates and anaesthetists are types of professional trained to administer anaesthesia.

Anaesthetists are doctors with specialist training who are able to:

- See patients in the pre-operative clinic and optimise your medical conditions to make anaesthesia as safe as possible for you.
- Discuss with you the types of anaesthetic that are suitable for your operation.
- If there are choices available, will help you choose and discuss the risks, benefits and alternatives including not proceeding with you.
- Agree a plan for your anaesthetic.

- Understand the way pain killers work and undertake procedures to optimise your pain control.
- Use their knowledge about methods of controlling pain to agree a plan for controlling your pain after surgery.
- Give your anaesthetic and are responsible for your pain and wellbeing throughout the surgery and in the recovery.
- Manage complications of surgery and anaesthesia.
- Look after patients who have had surgery.
- Look after patients who are critically unwell and on the intensive care unit or high dependency unit.

Anaesthesia associates:

- Are a type of health professional introduced into the NHS in 2004.
- Are not doctors, but are skilled practitioners who come from a healthcare background and have completed a two year comprehensive training programme.
- Work under the supervision of a consultant anaesthetist, with a maximum of two anaesthesia associates to one consultant who is present in the department.
- Anaesthesia associates at the West Suffolk are mainly involved in meeting you on the day of your anaesthetic, delivering your anaesthetic and looking after you until you leave the operating department.

Immediately after the operation:

Following your operation, you will be transferred to the “Post anaesthetic care unit” (PACU), or Recovery, where there are more nurses than on the ward. This allows us to monitor you closely as you recover from your anaesthetic. Whilst you are in the Recovery unit the nurses will be able to give you medication to help you feel better before you return to the ward. It is not uncommon to need some medication for pain or nausea in the immediate period after an operation.

The amount of time that you spend in PACU will be dependent on your other medical conditions and the type of surgery you have. You could spend as little as an hour there or you may need to spend more than 24 hours. Where longer stays are predictable this will be discussed with you beforehand.

You may have a drain (small plastic tube) to collect fluid from the surgery site. You will have regular painkillers prescribed with additional painkillers you can ask for.

To prevent blood clots, you may be given, stockings, compression boots, injections or tablets depending on your individual needs.

Information for the first 24 - 48 hours after your anaesthetic

Rest for this period, whether you are in the hospital or at home.

Do not make any vital decisions or sign legal documents.

Do not drive a car, motorbike, or ride a bicycle. The team will advise you how long you need to wait after surgery before you resume driving.

Do not use power tools or household appliances, which may cause harm or injury.

Do not stand up quickly as it is not uncommon to become lightheaded after an anaesthetic.

Do not smoke, drink alcohol, or take recreational drugs.

Do not take sleeping tablets.

Please follow any special instructions which the surgeon or anaesthetist have given you.

You are likely to need additional support when you go home. Consider this before your operation, make sure that you have food available and simple painkillers such as paracetamol. You may want to consider whether you need a friend or family member to help with some tasks for a period after your surgery.

Diet advice

You may feel sick or vomit after a general anaesthetic. This is not uncommon. If it does occur, remain quiet, lie down and sip plain water until it passes.

Otherwise eat and drink normally - unless instructed differently.

Keeping in touch whilst in hospital

Main hospital: Visiting times vary according to ward. Please phone the main hospital on **01284 713000** and ask to be put through to the appropriate ward.

Raising concerns about the care you are receiving whilst in hospital

If you or your family are concerned about the care that you are receiving, and you have not received satisfactory explanation from the team looking after you, there are two main points of contact. If you would like impartial advice or help with queries, support and issues you may be having with services provided by the West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust contact **PALS**.

PALS is open from 09.00 - 16.00, Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays. The office is situated within the main entrance foyer of the hospital, opposite the main information desk. If there is no one in the office during opening hours, please speak to one of the volunteers on the information desk, who will be able to contact the team to come and see you. You can also contact PALS by telephone on **01284 712555** (24 hour answerphone facility) or by email at pals@wsh.nhs.uk or via an online form at <https://www.wsh.nhs.uk/Patients-and-visitors/Your-views-matter/Send-us-your-compliments-suggestions-or-complaints.aspx>.

If you or your family have an immediate concern that your condition is getting worse and its not being addressed by the team looking after you then you can contact the **“Call 4 Concern”** team, which is run by the critical care outreach team. To get in touch phone the main hospital phone number **(01284 713000)** and ask for “Call for Concern”.

Further information about your operation can be found on the West Suffolk Hospital website www.wsh.nhs.uk and click on “patient leaflets”.

The Royal College of Anaesthetists provides pre-surgical information specific to a variety of procedures, this is available on their website:

<https://www.rcoa.ac.uk/patients/patient-information-resources/preparing-surgery-fitter-better-sooner>

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust is actively involved in clinical research. Your doctor, clinical team or the research and development department may contact you regarding specific clinical research studies that you might be interested in participating in. If you do not wish to be contacted for these purposes, please email info.gov@wsh.nsh.uk. This will in no way affect the care or treatment you receive.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for



DisabledGo) <https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>

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References:

1. RCoA Preparing for Surgery – Fitter Better Sooner <https://www.rcoa.ac.uk/patients/patient-information-resources/preparing-surgery-fitter-better-sooner>
2. RCoA patient information leaflet “You and your anaesthetic”