NHS
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Advice following laparoscopic (keyhole) hernia repair

Adult Day Surgery Unit

This leaflet gives advice to aid your recovery following your procedure on the Adult Day Surgery Unit.

What is a hernia?

A hernia is a bulging of internal organs or intra-abdominal fat through a gap or defect in the muscle wall.

The operation involves the insertion of small tubes (usually 3) through the abdominal wall through which a camera and surgical instruments can be passed. When you wake up, you will see three or four plasters over the insertion sites. These sites will have been stitched or glued.

After the operation

- Please start gently mobilising straight away, and you can resume your normal activity gradually, as you feel able. It is quite safe to start exercising 2 weeks post-operatively if you are comfortable enough to do this.
- Your wound will usually be closed with either skin glue or a waterproof dressing. You can have a shower but avoid soaking the dressing or baths for 4 days post-operatively. If a dressing is present, you can then remove this, leaving the wounds uncovered to help with the healing process.
- Your nurse will let you know if stitches were used instead of glue. These are dissolvable stitches that take 4-6 weeks to disappear.
- You may experience some upper abdominal pain and discomfort during the first 24 hours post-operatively, which is mainly due to the use of carbon dioxide gas to inflate your abdomen, The pain can radiate up into your shoulders. This is completely normal. You may also experience some lower abdominal aching and swelling, which may be due to bruising (haematoma), and this should gradually improve over the first week post-operatively.

You should take regular painkillers (such as Paracetomol or Ibuprofen) to help relieve your pain.

- It is not uncommon to experience difficulties in passing water post-operatively, particularly if you have had hernia repairs on both groins and/or you have already experienced problems with urinating in the past. If you are unable to pass water once you have gone home, you must come back to the hospital for assessment.
- If the pain worsens or becomes unbearable or you have any other problem related to your operation, please contact your GP.
- You should stay off work for _____ (please ask nursing staff for a fit note if required).
- You may need to refrain from work for longer than this, depending on the healing process. Please make an appointment with your GP if this needs to be reviewed.
- Avoid heavy lifting for four to six weeks.
- Do not drive for three to five days as the operation may have affected your reflexes. Check with your motor insurance company before driving a vehicle.
- For any problems regarding wound discomfort or weeping, please telephone the Adult Day Surgery Unit for advice. Out of hours, contact NHS 111.

If there is anything you do not understand or if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to discuss them with your nurse.

During the first 24 hours following your discharge

If you have any further concerns about your surgery, please telephone the ADSU: 0118 322 7622.

Opening hours are 7.30am to 10.00pm Monday-Friday. If you need help/advice outside these hours, please telephone the Royal Berkshire Hospital switchboard on 0118 322 5111 and ask for the on-call surgery doctor. Please note that this should be for emergencies only.

After 24 hours, please seek advice from your GP or call NHS 111.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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Next review due: November 2028