

# Minor vulval surgery: aftercare advice

## Information for patients

You have had minor vulval surgery. The following explains what you should do when you get home to look after yourself and your wound.

### When you get home and for the first few days after your surgery

- Arrange for someone to collect you from the hospital and look after you for the first 24 hours.
- You must rest for 24 to 48 hours after your operation.
- If you have had a general anaesthetic, avoid drinking alcohol, smoking, or taking sleeping tablets for 24 hours after your operation.
- If you have had a general anaesthetic, do not drive, cook, or operate any machinery for 24 to 48 hours after your operation.

### How do I control my pain after surgery?

You will have been given painkillers by the hospital to take home with you. When you feel pain, take these according to the instructions on the label. If your pain is not controlled by these tablets, contact one of the Day Surgery Centres for advice (contact details are on the next page).

### How do I care for my wound at home?

- You may have a bath or shower whenever you want. Do not add salt or Savlon to the bath water and do not use scented bubble baths or shower gels. Make sure you dry your skin carefully afterwards.
- In the case of Bartholin's cyst / abscess, a small piece of gauze will have been inserted into the abscess or cyst cavity; this will be removed after 24 hours. The hospital staff will tell you whether this should be removed by your GP or district nurse.



### Do I need to have my stitches removed?

No. Your stitches are dissolvable; these take two to three weeks to dissolve.

### Can I eat and drink after my surgery?

You may eat and drink when you get home, as long as you do not feel sick. Start with small drinks (not alcohol) and a light snack. If you are thirsty, drink as much as you need (not alcohol).

### When can I return to work?

You need to take two to three days off work.

### When can I have sex again?

Avoid sexual intercourse for three weeks or until your vulval area feels comfortable; whichever is the longer.

### What if I have any questions or concerns?

If you have any queries or concerns, please contact Day Surgery on the numbers below or your GP.

- Channel Day Surgery, **William Harvey Hospital**, Ashford  
Telephone: 01233 61 62 63 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- Canterbury Day Surgery Centre, **Kent and Canterbury Hospital**, Canterbury  
Telephone: 01227 78 31 14 (7:30am to 8pm)  
Telephone: 07887 68 76 45 (8pm to 7:30am)
- Day Surgery, **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital**, Margate  
Telephone: 01843 23 44 99 (7:30am to 8pm)  
Telephone: 07887 65 11 62 (8pm to 7:30am)

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments** please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email [ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital.** Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site [www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation](http://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation)