



# Information for gynaecology patients for before and after their operation

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## Information for patients from Women's Health

You have been referred to the hospital for a gynaecology procedure. This leaflet will explain:

- how you can prepare for your procedure
- what will happen afterwards; and
- who to contact if you have any questions or concerns.

We hope the leaflet will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of your healthcare team.

### How can I prepare for my surgery?

While you wait for your surgery date, you can start preparing for your operation. Research shows that fitter patients, who are able to improve their health and activity levels before surgery, recover more quickly. Taking an active role in planning and preparing for your operation will help you:

- feel in control
- leave hospital sooner; and
- get back to normal more quickly.

To help with this, you may be contacted by a member of the One You Kent (OYK) team. OYK work in the community, and help patients improve their general health. This includes help and advice on:

- Stopping smoking
- Losing weight
- Getting more exercise.

More information can be found on the following web sites.

- One You Kent (<https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/one-you-kent/>) (Kent Community Health)
- Fitter Better Sooner Toolkit (<https://www.cpoc.org.uk/patients/fitter-better-sooner-toolkit>) (Royal College of Anaesthetists)

### What items should I bring to hospital?

Please bring your:

- toiletries
- usual nightwear, including slippers and a dressing gown
- usual medication (in the original box); and
- loose comfortable clothing to wear in the day, and for when you are discharged home.

### Anticoagulation (thinning of the blood)

If you need to take anticoagulant medication before your procedure, the pre-assessment nurse will discuss this with you. You will be shown how you, or a friend or relative, can do this at home.

### When should I stop eating and drinking?

The pre-assessment nurse will discuss this with you and ask you to make a note of the reminder.

Failure to follow this information will result in your procedure being cancelled.

- **7:30am admission**

- You can eat and drink as normal until midnight (the night before your surgery).
- From midnight until 6am you can drink clear fluids, such as black tea / coffee, herbal tea, or water. Do not drink juices or milky drinks.
- Speak to your pre-assessment nurse about taking your usual medication.

- **11:30am admission**

- It is important to have a light breakfast no later than 7am on the morning of your surgery. This can be tea / coffee with milk, and toast. **Do not eat any more food until after your surgery.**
- You may drink water until 10am.
- Speak to your pre-assessment nurse about taking your usual medication.

### What should I do before I arrive at the hospital?

Before you come into hospital, please remove:

- make-up

- jewellery (except wedding rings)
- any piercings; and
- nail varnish.

Being prepared helps both you and the nursing staff. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

### What will happen when I arrive at the hospital?

- On arrival at **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital** you will be asked to go to either Day Surgery or the Surgical Admissions Lounge.
- At **William Harvey Hospital** you will be asked to go to either Channel Day Surgery or the Women's Health Suite.

On admission you will be greeted by a member of the ward team and introduced to your named nurse. They will discuss with you the care you will receive while you are in hospital. You will also be seen by your consultant or one of their team.

If you need to stay in hospital after your operation, you will be given an inpatient bed. Do not worry about your belongings, they will be kept safe and taken to the ward where you have a bed.

To help reduce cross-infection we ask that visitors do not sit on patients' beds. When entering and leaving the ward, visitors must use the hand gel provided.

### When can I leave hospital?

You may be asked to leave your bed area after breakfast and sit in the waiting area until your discharge has been completed. This will not affect your care.

Make sure you have:

- all your belongings; and
- that your medications have been removed from your medicine locker before leaving the ward.

### What if I have pain at home?

Nursing staff will make sure you have been given medication to help with any discomfort you are feeling. They will discuss its use with you before you leave hospital. If you need advice, please phone the hospital on one of the numbers below.

- Gynaecology Assessment Unit, **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital**, Margate  
Telephone: 01843 235009
- Women's Health Suite, **William Harvey Hospital**, Ashford  
Telephone: 01233 651987

## How should I look after my wound at home?

You may be discharged home with a dressing over your wound.

- The original dressing may be left in place for up to two days, providing it is clean, dry, and not soaked with blood or other liquid.
- After this time, remove the dressing carefully, avoid touching the incision (cut) with your fingers.
- The skin edges usually seal themselves within 24 to 48 hours of the operation. This does vary from person to person.
- Small wounds can be left without a dressing.

## When can I have a bath and / or shower?

- You will be advised when to shower / bath following your surgery.
- You can let water gently splash your wound.
- Do not use of salt or disinfectant. Rinse the area with plain, fresh, warm tap water after washing.
- Dry carefully by patting your wound gently with a clean towel; avoid rubbing the wound area.

## When will my stitches be removed?

The nurse will discuss with you which type of skin closure (stitches) you have. They will also tell you whether these need to be removed, and if so where. For example they may be removed at either your GP surgery, local Urgent Treatment Centre, or on the ward. Or you may have had stitches that dissolve on their own.

Removal can be 3 days after laparoscopic (keyhole) procedures. However, depending on your operation the stitches may be not be removed for 5 to 14 days.

## What if I feel unwell or have concerns when I return home?

If you have any concerns about your wound, contact either of the units listed below for advice. You need to contact us if your wound is:

- becoming more painful
- looking red, inflamed, hot, or swollen
- leaking any sort of fluid and smelling unpleasant
- gaping.

Ten to 14 days after surgery, it is normal to have a brown stringy discharge from your vagina. Spotting may continue for up to 6 weeks after your procedure, depending on the type of operation you had.

We are here to help you. If you have any concerns, please phone either of the units and speak to a senior member of nursing staff.

## Contact details

For further information, please refer to your surgical leaflet or contact either of the units.

- Gynaecology Assessment Unit, **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital**, Margate  
Telephone: 01843 235009
- Women's Health Suite, **William Harvey Hospital**, Ashford  
Telephone: 01233 651987

**This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.**

### Please let us know:

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

### You can let us know this by:

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments**, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email ([ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)).

**Patients should not bring 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 has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient information leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

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