



Gloucestershire Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Having an operation at Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Introduction

This leaflet gives you information about what you can expect when you have surgery at one of our hospitals and how to prepare for your surgery.



If you need an interpreter or information in a different language, please phone the number on your admission letter.

After your outpatient appointment

When it is decided that you will have an operation, you will be invited to attend a pre-operative appointment (this may be a phone call). Without this pre-operative assessment appointment, you may not be able to have your operation.



IMPORTANT

If you cannot make your date, you **MUST** call the number on your admission letter to let us know.

Missed operations cost the NHS and mean other patients' treatment and care will be delayed.

Following the pre-operative appointment you will receive a letter giving you the following information:

- The date of your operation.
- The hospital where the operation will take place.

- The department you need to go to and the time for you to arrive.

Our Day Surgery Units are waiting areas which allow you to be checked in and prepared for your operation. This means that you can stay at home the night before.



Preparing at home in the days before your surgery

Feeling unwell?

In the days leading up to your operation, if you feel unwell, you have flu, cold or cough symptoms, diarrhoea, vomiting or have been exposed to chickenpox, you must contact the hospital on **0300 422 2515**.

If you are unwell, it is safer to delay your operation; we will offer you another date.

Lifestyle changes

If you are a smoker, we recommend that you stop smoking before the surgery. The hospital sites are all non-smoking. Stopping smoking is good for your general health and can reduce your risks of having complications following your surgery. If you would like to give up smoking, please call the NHS Smoking Helpline on **0300 123 1044**.

Stopping the use of any alcohol consumption and recreational drugs will also reduce complications during surgery. Eating a balanced diet and working towards a healthy weight will improve your physical fitness during and after your surgery.

Checklist for your preparation bag

- Your admission letter and any information we have sent you regarding your surgery.
- Any medications including sprays, patches, creams, drops or inhalers, in their original packaging.
- Any specific medical devices for example Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) or stoma supplies- please bring enough.
- Small amounts of money if you wish to buy newspapers etc.
- Nightclothes and a set of comfortable day clothes as we will expect you to get up and dressed as soon as possible after your operation.
- Your glasses, contact lenses and any mobility or hearing aids, toiletries and sanitary products; including toothbrush, hairbrush, slippers and dressing gown.

- Items of religious importance to you.
- A book to occupy your time when waiting.
- Your mobile phone and charger.
- Contact details of the person who is collecting you.
- If you would like to bring a light snack, please make sure that it does not require heating or storing in a fridge.



IMPORTANT

Please do not bring valuables, such as jewellery, large sums of money, multiple credit cards or expensive electrical items (except mobile phone). There are no facilities to store valuables. The hospital will not be liable for loss or damage.

Medicines

Please bring any medicines you are currently taking with you on the day of admission in its original packaging. We advise that you buy pain relief before the day of your operation such as paracetamol and/or ibuprofen. Your local pharmacist will be able to provide advice on what is most suitable for you.

If you have been given instructions about stopping medicines e.g. blood thinners from your pre-operative assessment nurse, you must make sure that you have followed the advice given or your surgery may be cancelled on the day.

The evening before your surgery

- Please have a bath or a wash (especially if you have been given special body wash and/or nasal cream to use).
- Do not apply moisturising cream or talcum powder.
- Please remove all nail varnish and false nails.

Your visit

There are a few things to think about before you come in for your operation: Do you have communication, learning disabilities or mobility issues that mean you will need help from us on the day of admission? If so, let us know by contacting your booking coordinator on your admissions letter.



On the day of your surgery

If you are going to be admitted to the ward, please follow the instructions on your admission letter.

Research has shown it is important that you remain a comfortable temperature before your surgery as this can reduce infection rates after your operation. We suggest that you wear several layers of clothing to help regulate your temperature to help you keep warm whilst you are waiting for your operation.

On arrival at the Day Surgery Unit or a ward, the nursing staff will help prepare you for surgery. This includes completing the necessary paperwork, recording clinical observations and providing you with any surgical garments you may need to wear. If you are a female under the age of 55 you may need to take a pregnancy test. The nurses will discuss this with you.

You will then meet with a member of your surgical team and your anaesthetist to discuss the procedure and anaesthetic process. You will be asked to sign a consent form which states that you agree to have the treatment and that you understand what it involves. You will be able to ask questions about anything you are not sure about.



IMPORTANT

Please let us know if you are going to be late, by calling the number on your admissions letter.

Fasting (Nil by mouth)

Please follow the instructions written in your 'To Come In' (TCI) letter.

If you have been given specific food or bowel preparation instructions it is important that you follow them carefully. If you have not been given specific instructions, please see the guidelines below:

If you have been asked to arrive **before 11am**

Before 2am
2am – 6am
After 6am

Food
✓ Yes
✗ No
✗ No

Water
✓ Yes
✓ Yes
✗ No

If you have been asked to arrive **after 11am**

Before 7am
7am – 11am
After 11am

Food
✓ Yes (see below)
✗ No
✗ No

Water
✓ Yes
✓ Yes
✗ No

***If 'Yes' is ticked in the food section above, this means you may have a drink of black tea, black coffee or squash and eat a light breakfast, such as lightly buttered toast.**

There is no benefit to fasting for longer periods of time, it may be harmful and delay recovery.

How long will I need to wait before my operation?

The time on your letter is the admission time to the department/ward. This is not the time that you will have your surgery. Your surgeon or anaesthetist will do their best to advise you how long you may have to wait, but unfortunately it can be unpredictable. It is worth bringing something to help occupy the time such as a book or newspaper.

Can I bring someone with me?

Our Day Surgery Unit and ward areas have very limited space, we are sorry that accompanying adults cannot stay with you after dropping you off. This is to maintain the safety, security and dignity of all our patients. If you wish to tell us of any exceptional circumstances, please contact us, in advance of your surgery date, using the number on your admissions letter. Or speak to our staff, in confidence, when you arrive. We will do our best to help you where possible.

Information for your accompanying adult

Our Day Surgery Unit has a drop-off and pick-up policy. Accompanying adults cannot wait with the patient. Children are strictly prohibited. If you choose to wait within the hospital grounds, please be aware that this may be for several hours. There are a number of

cafés, restaurants and waiting spaces which staff can direct you to.

We will need a way to contact your nominated adult on the day of surgery. Please check with them that their phone is fully charged and that they are contactable throughout the day. We will contact them when you are nearly ready to go home. Your nominated adult will be able to join you after you have completed your time in recovery and will be advised where to collect you from. They will need to help escort you home and make sure that there is some provision of care and support the first 24 hours.

This includes:



IMPORTANT

Help with household activities; cooking, offering plenty of fluids (non-alcoholic), help with washing or dressing if required; and calling for help if any post-surgery problems arise.



IMPORTANT

If you have any concerns or questions about how you can best care for your friend or relative, please do not hesitate to ask a member of staff on the day.

Recovering in hospital

You will recover from the immediate effects of your surgery in a recovery area, where we will assist with any post-surgery pain and sickness. Each person will recover at different rates. From there you will either be discharged home or admitted to a ward. Clinical staff will tell you if you need to stay overnight. If you are unsure, please ask.

If you are admitted to a ward, the nursing team will provide you with relevant welcome information about that ward, including visiting times and facilities. You and your accompanying friend or family member will be notified on the day which ward you will be going to.

Please be advised that if you have your surgery at a community hospital (Stroud, Cirencester, Tewkesbury) and you need to stay overnight following your surgery, you will be transferred to either Gloucestershire Royal Hospital or Cheltenham General Hospital.

Being discharged home

If you are being discharged home on the same day, you will move to a single-sex patient only discharge lounge. You will be given some light refreshments and have your last set of clinical checks from our nursing team.

After your surgery you will be advised on how to take any new medications. We will discuss any follow up appointments with you before you are discharged.

Appointment details will be posted to you. If you do not receive an appointment letter within the timeframe for your appointment, please contact your consultant's secretary.

Recovering at home

You may find that it takes you a few days or weeks to feel fully recovered dependent on the type of surgery you have had. Every patient recovers differently and there is no definite rule as to when you can start doing your usual activities again. Your surgeon may give you specific advice.

Do not:

- drive a car, ride a bike or operate machinery
- cook, use sharp utensils, pour hot liquids or drink alcohol
- smoke
- take sleeping tablets
- make important decisions or sign contracts

To prepare yourself for your operation, and recovery advice, please visit the following website:
www.rcoa.ac.uk/fitterbettersooner

Travel and parking

Everything you need to know about travelling to our hospitals can be found on our website at:

www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/travel-parking/

The location of our hospital car parks, site maps and parking charges are also on our website. Please remember that our hospitals are busy places and you should allow plenty of time to get here, park and make your way to your appointment.

If you think you might qualify for hospital transport to get to your appointment, please call the Patient Transport Advice Centre on: **01278 726 968**

A bus service (Route 99) runs between Cheltenham General and Gloucestershire Royal Hospitals, available every weekday (excluding Bank Holidays) every 30 minutes. The bus route also includes Cheltenham town centre, Arle Court Park & Ride and Gloucester Bus Station.

Please visit the following website for further information:
www.pulhamscoaches.com

This website helps you plan your journey using public transport: www.travelinesw.com

Any other questions

If you would like to get in touch with the Trust about any other matter, you can find contact details for departments, consultants, complaints and more on our website at www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk.

Alternatively, you can call us on:

Tel: 0300 422 2222

or write to us at:

Trust HQ

Alexandra House

Cheltenham General Hospital

Sandford Road

GL53 7AN

Content reviewed: January 2026

Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.

Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation.

***Ask 3 Questions** is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>



Registered Charity 1051606

Every donation you choose to give helps your local hospitals do more to care for you, everyone you love and our passionate NHS staff. If you would like to find out more, please contact: Charity Office **0300 422 3231** or visit gloshospitals.nhs.uk/charity

GHP11615_01_26
Department: Theatres
Review due: January 2029
www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk