



Advice to patients following cytoreductive surgery and HIPEC *

The following information gives you advice about recovery after your operation and HIPEC* as well as guidance about activities after leaving hospital.

*HIPEC = Hyperthermic Intraperitoneal Chemotherapy.

First few days at home

For the first week at home you should rest, following the same routine as in hospital. You may walk round the house, up and down stairs as necessary. Following this surgery, you may find you become tired easily. Do not worry about this. The return to your usual activities takes time and is a gradual process. In general, do what feels comfortable.

You will usually require a blood thinning injection of Clexane every day for 28 days after surgery. If you go home before 28 days, you will be taught how to give yourself these injections. This is to reduce your risk of developing a clot in the leg, called a deep vein thrombosis (DVT) or in the lung, called a pulmonary embolus (PE). Please continue to wear your surgical stockings whilst receiving your Clexane injections.

Discomfort

It is quite common to have some discomfort around your wound after surgery. We advise you to take your painkillers regularly as prescribed by your doctor. Take these for as long as you have pain, so that you are able to breathe deeply, cough, sleep and move more comfortably.

Good posture

It is very important to maintain good posture, allowing yourself to become stooped or even round shouldered may encourage back pain to develop.

Walking

Regular walking is recommended as the main exercise after your operation to maintain fitness. Begin with pottering around the garden or to the local shops and gradually progress by increasing the distance and/or speed of your walk.

Household tasks and gardening

Remember these are only guidelines. You should take things at your own pace and increase activities a little at a time. It is important to concentrate on becoming more active but at a pace your body dictates. If you have any pain – stop. Contact the Specialist Nurse if you have any doubts.

First 4 weeks at home

Start by taking things gently. You may begin light activities in the house, such as washing up, dusting and easy household jobs.

Information for Patients

After 4 weeks

You may increase activities to include for example, vacuuming, ironing, cooking, hanging out the washing and making beds.

After 6 weeks

Provided there are no problems at your check up, resume all normal activities within your own limits. You can start light gardening jobs. Hand weeding, planting out small plants, kneeling on all fours and light hoeing are acceptable.

Lifting

Reduce lifting wherever possible in the first 6 weeks following your surgery, to allow your body to heal correctly. As a guide, do not lift more than a 3 pint kettle of water, or its equivalent. That is 3 to 4 kgs or 6 to 8lbs. Heavy lifting or moving furniture should not be attempted until 12 weeks after surgery.

Remember

When you do lift – do it correctly. With your feet apart, bend your knees, keep your back straight, and tighten your tummy muscles. Hold the object close to your body and lift by straightening the knees.

Sport and active hobbies

A gradual return to exercise is essential.

After 4 weeks at home

You can start gentle exercise/hobbies, such as bowling and dancing.

After 8 weeks at home

More strenuous exercise such as swimming, golf, racquet sports, jogging, aerobics, cycling and most other sports can be started. If worried, check with your doctor.

Driving

Driving should be avoided for 3 to 4 weeks following surgery and you should only start to drive when you feel able to perform an emergency stop safely. However, do check that your car insurance policy does not have an exclusion relating to major surgery.

Returning to work

Your own doctor will advise you when to return to work. It may be any time up to 3 to 6 months, depending on the type of work you do., the amount of travelling involved, the extent of the surgery and the rate of recovery.

Sexual Intercourse

This may be resumed as soon as you feel comfortable. It may be advisable for women who have undergone a hysterectomy to wait until after their post operative check-up (approximately 6 to 8 weeks) to make sure the area is completely healed. You may wish to be referred to a Psychologist to discuss things with you and your partner in more depth, if this is the case, please let the Specialist Nurse know.

Follow – up

The specialist nurse will telephone you at 1 week following discharge and your consultant will see you approximately 6 weeks following your surgery. If you have any questions between these times, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Information for Patients

A summary with the details of your operation, recovery and your medication will be sent to your GP practice a short time following your discharge. Contact your GP if you are unwell or if you have any worries regarding your recovery.

A CT scan will be arranged one year from your operation, either at University Hospitals Birmingham or at your local hospital.

Psychological support

It is normal to feel very emotional after surgery and when you return home. The specialist nurse can refer you to other professionals for emotional support, if this is something that you would like.

Specialist Nurses direct line: 0121 424 7429

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