



Discharge advice after lung surgery – making progress at home

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Version 1

> About this leaflet

The purpose of this leaflet is to let you know what to expect while recovering at home after lung surgery.

> Manage your pain

- It is common to have mild discomfort, tightness or numbness around your wound sites after lung surgery.
- Take your painkillers regularly, follow the instructions on the box. This is especially important for the first 2 weeks.
- Make sure you do not run out of pain medication. If needed, contact your GP in advance to request a prescription

> Take care of your wounds

- Take care of your wounds daily. You may need to use a mirror to see them. Mild redness and bruising are normal and will gradually improve.
- Contact your GP if you notice your wound has any new redness or discharge
- Keep wounds clean and dry, it is preferred that you shower and avoid taking baths until your wounds are fully healed.
- Support your wounds with a towel or a pillow when coughing.

> Work on your breathing

- Mild shortness of breath when you are moving about is normal.
- Continue doing your breathing and coughing exercises regularly throughout the day. This helps you to avoid chest infections and keeps your lungs healthy and strong.
- Use your **Incentive Spirometer** daily if you have been given one.
- **Do not smoke or vape.** Use nicotine replacements such as patches or gum to help keep cravings low.

> Move regularly

- Continue with your walking programme and gradually increase how far you go.
- Walk outside if you can.
- It is common to feel slightly short of breath when you walk – this will improve as you heal.
- Feeling more tired than normal is very common after surgery – rest as needed.
- Climbing stairs is allowed - if you feel able.

Eat for recovery

- It is normal for your appetite to be reduced after surgery. It is recommended that you eat small, nutritious meals to make the most of the appetite you have.
- Eat plenty of protein such as meat, fish, dairy, lentils and beans.
- Constipation is common, especially when using pain medication. If your bowels have not moved for a day, please take the laxatives you were provided when discharged.

Expected recovery time – a general guide

- **Weeks 1-2** – Expect to have some pain, feel tired, and experience some shortness of breath.
- **Weeks 3-4** – Expect gradual improvement in mobility.
- **Weeks 5-6** – Many people resume light, normal activity.
- **3 months** – You should have significant recovery of your stamina levels.
- **6-12 months** – You will have fully recovered and adapted to your new normal.

Further information

Please attend A & E if you experience the following:

- Sudden shortness of breath.
- Chest pain.
- Coughing up large amounts of blood.
- Fever and/or chills.
- Increasing swelling in your legs.
- Fast heartbeat that doesn't settle at rest.

If you are admitted to hospital, please inform your lung surgery nurses on 0141 951 5642 or 0141 951 5407.

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