

## OPHTHALMOLOGY – Cataract Surgery

### Introduction

We have been working hard to recover elective services as quickly as possible, transforming and integrating services and how we deliver care across Somerset, following our recent merger. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital. The guidance has been written in consultation with clinicians who are responsible for your care.

### Guidance for Patients

It is important that while you are waiting for your surgery you remain as active and as medically fit as possible. This can also help you to recover more quickly afterwards. People who exercise regularly also have a lower risk of developing many long term (chronic) conditions (such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke and some cancers), and research shows that physical activity can also boost self-esteem, mood, sleep quality and energy, and can reduce stress and clinical depression.

If you have any long-standing conditions such as high blood pressure, you should get these regularly reviewed at your GP surgery to make sure they remain well controlled. This will also help to prevent any unnecessary delays when you come in for your pre-operative assessment. Maintaining a well-balanced diet is also important, as is reducing any excessive weight that may be impacting on your general health. If you are a current smoker or drink heavily, we'd strongly advise you to seek support to help with stopping.

Make sure you have arranged for someone to take you and pick you up after your procedure prior to coming in.

### Take your medication

Continue taking your medication while waiting for your surgery, as directed by your GP and hospital specialist. When the pre-op assessment team contacts you, remember to inform them of all medicines, vitamins, herbal remedies and supplements you take, so that they can give you clear information on whether you should stop taking your usual medicines before going into hospital.

**Hypertension** – if you are on medication for high blood pressure, please ensure you are taking these regularly and do let your GP know that you are due for your eye surgery – we may not be able to proceed with the surgery if the blood pressure is more than 190/100mmHg on the day of the surgery.

**Diabetes** – Please ensure that the blood sugar level is well controlled. The HbA1c should be less than 69mmol/mmol for routine procedures. Your procedure may not be able to go ahead if the levels higher than this. Please let us know if your levels are higher than the therapeutic range by calling the numbers below.

**Warfarin** – Please ensure that the INR levels are within your therapeutic range (this would have been decided by the clinician who started you on warfarin and is recorded in the yellow book). You will need to have it checked no more than 48 hours before your surgery day – please contact us if your levels are higher than the therapeutic range.

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The NHS website has lots of tools and support to help with your general health and fitness. Some useful websites are listed below:

For help and support with losing weight: [www.nhs.uk/better-health/lose-weight/](http://www.nhs.uk/better-health/lose-weight/)

For advice on eating well: [www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/)

For help and support with getting or keeping active: [www.nhs.uk/better-health/get-active/](http://www.nhs.uk/better-health/get-active/)

More locally, Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP) have lots of information for adults, children and young people on how to be more active: [Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership - Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership \(sasp.co.uk\)](http://Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership - Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership (sasp.co.uk))

For older people Age UK offer a range of activities and exercise classes. You can find out about any classes in your local area on the Age UK website: [Age UK | The UK's leading charity helping every older person who needs us](http://Age UK | The UK's leading charity helping every older person who needs us)

For help and support with quitting smoking: [www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/](http://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/)

For help and support with drinking less alcohol: [www.nhs.uk/better-health/drink-less/](http://www.nhs.uk/better-health/drink-less/)

### Good mental health

People sometimes feel worried or anxious before a hospital appointment or treatment. This is perfectly normal. Some people might also find that an existing mental health condition gets worse, so looking after your mental health is just as important as your physical health. You can find helpful links for mental health support on the NHS website: [www.nhs.uk/mental-health/](http://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/)

Mental health charity Mind also has webpages about COVID-19 and your wellbeing: [www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing)

Talking therapies, or psychological therapies, are effective and confidential treatments delivered by fully trained and accredited NHS practitioners. They can help with common mental health problems like stress, anxiety and depression. You can self refer here: [Online Referral - Talking Therapies - Somerset NHS Foundation Trust \(somersetft.nhs.uk\)](http://Online Referral - Talking Therapies - Somerset NHS Foundation Trust (somersetft.nhs.uk))

### Patients with caring responsibilities

Waiting for hospital treatment can be a particularly worrying time for patients who are also carers for others, as they need to think also about the loved one they are caring for and make alternative arrangements for them when it is time for them to attend hospital. The Community Council for Somerset is contracted by Somerset County Council to run the Somerset Carers service. There are over 60,000 unpaid carers in Somerset. If you regularly look after someone in an unpaid capacity, Somerset Carers can support you with advice and guidance:

[www.ccslovesomerset.org/somerset-carers/](http://www.ccslovesomerset.org/somerset-carers/)

### What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

Cataracts generally cause a gradually progressive reduction in sight. Any sudden reduction in sight or other symptoms such as flashing lights, floaters, a localised blind spot/shadow in your peripheral vision, distortion of your central vision (particularly when looking at straight lines) or redness or pain in your eyes would not be caused by

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cataract. If you experience any of these symptoms while waiting, you will need to seek help soon from your GP or optician or contact Eye Casualty 01823 344662

### Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk). The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### Life Threatening Emergencies

For something life threatening – severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999.

### Contact Us

For general queries, if your surgery is planned to take place at Musgrove Park Hospital, please contact:

[Ophthalmologysecretaries@somersetft.nhs.uk](mailto:Ophthalmologysecretaries@somersetft.nhs.uk)

If your surgery is planned to take place at Yeovil Hospital, please contact the booking teams on 01935 384565 or the eye secretaries on 01935 384512.