

Upper Gastrointestinal Surgery – Removal of Gall Bladder / Cholecystectomy

Introduction

The COVID pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. 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 by clinicians who are responsible for your care.

Guidance for Patients

For most people with gallstones, symptoms are triggered by eating and this is worst with fattier foods, as fats in the diet release a hormone which causes the gallbladder to contract. Sticking to a very low fat diet will significantly reduce your symptoms and for some patients, may eliminate them completely, possibly avoiding the need for surgery.

While you are waiting for your surgery, avoid dairy products such as cheese, butter, cream, full fat milk and ice cream. Do not eat high fat snacks such as crisps and chocolates and cook your good by baking, poaching, steaming or grilling it, rather than by frying or roasting. Sticking to lean meats, fish, vegetables and fruit will minimise your symptoms and also improve your general health running up to your operation.

If you are overweight, then losing some excess weight will make both the surgery and anaesthetic significantly safer and stopping smoking will also provide huge benefits. Likewise, you should make sure that any other medical conditions such as high blood pressure or asthma are as well controlled as possible, so that they do not cause delays when your appointment for surgery is available.

For some patients, these lifestyle changes eliminate their symptoms entirely and if this is the case for you, please contact your team to book a review to see whether surgery remains the correct option for you. Occasionally gallstones can cause problems, such as jaundice or pancreatitis and if you notice yellowing of the skin or eyes, or if you develop severe and constant upper abdominal pain that is different from your normal gallstone pain and lasts for more than 6 hours, please call 111 for advice.

To support our local residents to stop smoking or lose weight, the following services are available to provide free stop smoking and weight management support to our community.

Call: Andover War Memorial Hospital - 01962 863 535

Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital - 01256 473 202

Royal County Hampshire Hospital - 01962 863 535

Email: myplannedcare@hhft.nhs.uk

Website: www.hampshirehospitals.nhs.uk

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Health Lifestyles – We are here to help you and offer different levels of support to maintain a healthy weight and to stop smoking including telephone support, virtual and app-based support options.

Stop Smoking Service - <https://www.smokefreehampshire.co.uk/>. The stop smoking service provides a range of options to help you quit including support from an advisor, stop smoking medications, e-cigarettes and a digital offer for those who wish to quit by themselves.

If you are not ready to quit just yet but would like more information on how to protect your family, **Smoke Free Homes**, advises on how to make your home and car smoke free.

Weight Management Service - www.shapeup4lifehampshire.co.uk. The service supports adults aged 18 years or over who want to lose weight and have been identified as obese.

Find out your BMI

You can get help to lead a healthier lifestyle if you're an adult (18 years or over) living in Hampshire (but not Southampton or Portsmouth) and your body mass index (BMI) is above average. [Use the NHS calculator to find out your BMI](#). If it's too high, sign up for a programme that will help you lose weight.

BMI of 30+.

If your BMI is 30 or higher, you qualify for free support from [Shapeup4life Hampshire](#).

BMI of 28+

You can get free support from Shapeup4life Hampshire if you haven't paid to attend sessions with a commercial weight management provider in the last three months, and at least one of the following applies:

- you have Type 1 and 2 Diabetes or Metabolic Syndrome.
- you have problems with your heart, circulation, hypertension or high blood pressure.
- you have been diagnosed with anxiety/depression.
- you need to lose weight before receiving another medical treatment or surgery.
- you have a serious long-term health condition that is adversely affected by your weight such as muscular skeletal disorders (back pain, mobility issues) and asthma.
- you're from a black or ethnic minority background.

[Learn more and sign up with Shapeup4life Hampshire](#)

BMI of 25+

If you have a Body Mass Index of 25 or higher, [the NHS Weight Loss Plan](#) will help you start healthier eating habits, be more active, and start losing weight.

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The [NHS 12 week fitness plan](#) will support your weight loss plan as well as improve your health. This is aimed at beginners and will help get you into the habit of regular exercise over the course of the programme. It is structured but flexible enough to allow you to fit the exercise sessions around your other weekly commitments.

Healthy eating and being active

Information and advice on healthy eating and becoming more active is available from:

- [One You Eat Better](#) (website) - includes Easy Meals app for healthy meals and the Change4Life Food Scanner to help reduce levels of sugar in your diet.
- [Better Health - Get Active](#) (website) - includes tips on getting active for all, including the downloadable Active 10 app, as well as tailored advice for those living with a long-term condition.
- [Sugar Smart](#) is a campaign to raise awareness of hidden sugars, recommended levels and healthy alternatives by encouraging individuals, groups, businesses, schools and organisation to join the campaign and make a pledge. To find out how you can join in, become sugar smart and make good choices about what you, your family, colleagues eat.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If your condition suddenly worsens while you are waiting, you should seek advice.

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. 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.

GP surgeries are still open

If you experience an increase in pain or a significant reduction in mobility, you should in the first instance contact your General Practitioner for review and advice.

GP surgeries are still open and are working differently to how they did before the COVID-19 pandemic. GP practices continue to make best use of telephone, online and video consultations. Face-to-face appointments are still being given to those who need it.

When you phone or use an online form to contact your GP surgery to make an appointment, you will be asked some questions which are designed to help staff guide you to the most appropriate clinical person to help you with your condition. This could be a nurse, clinical pharmacist, physician's associate, GP or paramedic.

A list of GP practices with relevant contact details are available on the following website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/Services/Trusts/GPs/DefaultView.aspx?id=163127>



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Contact Us

Please direct any My Planned Care enquiries to myplannedcare@hhft.nhs.uk or 01962 825 616.