

Gynaecology - Repair of Prolapse

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.

Repair of Prolapse

Prolapse is very common. Mild prolapse often causes no symptoms and treatment is not always necessary. However, you should see your doctor if you think you may have a prolapse.

Prolapse can affect quality of life by causing symptoms such as discomfort or a feeling of heaviness. It can cause bladder and bowel problems, and sexual activity may also be affected.

Prolapse can be reduced with various lifestyle interventions including stopping smoking, weight loss, exercise and avoiding constipation, as well as avoidance of activities that may make your prolapse worse such as heavy lifting.

Treatment options to support your prolapse include physiotherapy, pessaries and surgery.

How severe your symptoms are and whether you choose to have surgery will depend on how your prolapse affects your daily life. Not everyone with prolapse needs surgery but you may want to consider surgery if other options have not adequately helped.

Surgery for prolapse aims to support the pelvic organs and to help ease your symptoms. It cannot always cure the problem completely. There are a few possible operations; the most suitable one for you will depend on your circumstances.

Guidance for Patients

The following may ease your symptoms and stop your prolapse from becoming worse:

- **Lifestyle changes:**
 - losing weight if you are overweight
 - managing a chronic cough if you have one; stopping smoking will help
 - avoiding constipation; talk to your doctor about ways of helping and treating constipation
 - avoiding heavy lifting; you may wish to talk to your employer if your job involves heavy lifting
 - avoiding physical activity such as trampolining or high-impact exercise.
- **Pelvic floor exercises** may help to strengthen your pelvic floor muscles. You may be referred for a course of treatment to a physiotherapist who specialises in prolapse.
- **Vaginal hormone treatment (oestrogen)** – if you have a mild prolapse and you have gone through the menopause; your doctor may recommend vaginal tablets or cream.

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It is important that while you are waiting for your surgery you remain as medically fit and active as possible.

If you have any long-standing conditions such as high blood pressure or diabetes you should get this reviewed at your doctor's surgery to make sure it remains well controlled. This will also help prevent any unnecessary delays when you come 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 it would be advisable to seek support to help with stopping. Alcohol consumption should be within accepted limits.

You should continue to take your prescribed medications and only stop after consultation with your GP.

It is recommended that you take regular exercise (20 minutes per day until you are short of breath, increasing a bit at a time). Take a brisk walk or consider an exercise bike.

Support is available at **Healthy Cornwall** to help you with:

- Weight management
- Healthy eating
- Stopping smoking
- Physical activity

Contact **Healthy Cornwall** at:

- Telephone - 01209 61500
- Email – healthy.cornwall@cornwall.gov.uk
- Website – www.healthycornwall.org.uk

Good Mental Health

There are many ways you can keep your mental health fit and well, just as you would your physical health.

Support is available at [Mental health - NHS Kernow CCG - NHS Kernow CCG](#)

Other Useful Information

Further links which may help you manage your condition whilst you await treatment:

- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/>

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

The most common symptom is the sensation of a lump 'coming down'. You may also have had backache, heaviness, or a dragging discomfort inside your vagina. These symptoms are often worse if you have been standing (or sitting) for a long time or at the end of the day. These symptoms often improve on lying down.

You may be able to feel or see a lump or bulge. You should see your doctor if this is the case because the prolapse may become sore, ulcerated, or infected.

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If your bladder has prolapsed into the vagina, you may:

- experience the need to pass urine more frequently
- have difficulty in passing urine or a sensation that your bladder is not emptying properly
- leak urine when coughing, laughing or lifting heavy objects
- have frequent urinary tract infections (cystitis).

If your bowel is affected, you may experience low back pain, constipation or incomplete bowel emptying. You may need to push back the prolapse to allow stools to pass.

Sex may be uncomfortable and you may also experience a lack of sensation during intercourse.

If you are concerned that your condition or symptoms are deteriorating since you were referred to us, please contact the Planned Care Patient Support Team on 0800 0357777. You will be asked to detail the changes in your condition/symptoms since seeing your GP at the time you were referred or following listing for surgery, and this will be passed to the clinical team will re-assess your priority.

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, 7 days a week.

Life Threatening Emergencies

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

Contact Us

Email: rch-tr.accessteam@nhs.net

Telephone: 01872 255084