

## TRAUMA & ORTHOPAEDICS – Primary Total Knee Replacement

### 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.

It is anticipated your stay in hospital following your Knee replacement will be less than 48hrs. Some people will go home on the same day. To enable this to happen there are some things that you can start to think about before your operation:

1. Who is taking you home?
2. Who will be around to lend a hand when you are back home after your operation?
3. Think about footwear - it needs to be safe and big enough to accommodate some swelling.
4. Preparing your house – some examples below:
  - a. Organising your kitchen to ensure items are within arm's reach so you are not having to bend down or reach up high
  - b. Think about the distances you have to travel in your home? Can you reduce these initially at all?
  - c. Be aware of the heights of your furniture, ensure often used items at home are accessible and not at low heights?
5. Consider purchasing long handled aids to practice with prior to your operation and bring them with you on admission. This will enable you to maintain independence on the ward while you are not able to bend down as easily to put on socks, shoes, trousers etc.
6. Stocking up your house with food

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7. You won't be able to drive after your operation for at least 6-8 weeks - who can support you during this time?

**Health.** Skin ulcers, general infections or any change in your health that occurs in the time between your clinic appointment and surgery will probably require prompt treatment to avoid cancellation. Some infections could lead to an infection in your new knee. Please see your GP if you are in doubt.

**Keeping Active.** Try to remain as fit and healthy as possible during your time on the waiting list as this will aid your recovery after surgery. It is better to take painkillers and stay mobile than not take anything and therefore limit your mobility.

**Exercises.** Start practising the exercises you have been given. Any strength gained preoperatively will improve post-operative recovery. Strengthening the muscles around your knee will help your recovery. This will support your new joint and help you return to normal activity more quickly after surgery.

**Smoking.** Smoking on hospital premises is prohibited. Try to stop smoking before you come into hospital. If you smoke, you are at much higher risk of complications such as infection and clots in your veins or lungs. It may be useful to discuss nicotine replacement therapy with your GP or pharmacist before your admission.

**Weight.** If you are overweight, you should try and lose weight to minimise complications after surgery. Your GP will be able to help you with a weight loss programme.

**Changing circumstances.** If your situation changes in any way whilst you are on the waiting list - if you change address or decide you do not want to go ahead with surgery - please contact the secretary of your named consultant to discuss this.

Arthritis is a common condition which causes joint pain and inflammation. Living with arthritis is not easy and carrying out simple, everyday tasks can often be painful and difficult. However, there are many things you can do to make life easier, and there is support available.

**Age UK** - [www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/conditions-illnesses/arthritis/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/conditions-illnesses/arthritis/)

Age UK provides information on activities and exercise class held by local Age UK representatives. They also signpost to advice on healthy eating options and maintaining a healthy weight especially important if you are being considered for surgery, and some of the options available to get help in the home

**Versus Arthritis** - [www.versusarthritis.org/](http://www.versusarthritis.org/)

Versus Arthritis is an arthritis charity, especially geared towards helping individuals manage differing forms of arthritis. They have useful online exercise programmes especially designed for those with painful arthritic conditions that will help maintain flexibility. They also offer self-help tips for managing arthritic pain.

**NHS Website living with arthritis** - [www.nhs.uk/conditions/arthritis/living-with/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/arthritis/living-with/)

This website carries useful information for those still at work and dealing with the impact of arthritis and useful links to financial and local government websites that may be able to offer you further support in your home.

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/)

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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/)

## Take your medication

Continue taking your medication while waiting for your surgery, as directed by your GP and hospital specialist. When they contact you, remember to inform the pre-op assessment team 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.

## Managing pain

Some people are in pain or discomfort while they are waiting for a hospital appointment or treatment. You can find help and advice on managing ongoing pain on the NHS website: [www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/how-to-get-nhs-help-for-your-pain/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/how-to-get-nhs-help-for-your-pain/) The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy also has helpful information on managing pain: [www.csp.org.uk/public-patient](http://www.csp.org.uk/public-patient)

If your pain is getting worse or you are finding it difficult to cope with, contact your GP or NHS 111.

## 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/)

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

Your knee may gradually worsen over time – this is normal. If you experience an increase in pain, inability to weight bear on this limb or reduction in mobility, you should in the first instance contact your GP for review and advice. If your mobility deteriorates dramatically due to your knee problem, it may be necessary to get a new X-ray of the knee. If this is the case, please contact the secretary of your named consultant to inform them of the situation, and they will discuss this with your consultant. If you cannot find the name of your consultant, please contact any of the secretaries as they will be able to direct your query in the most appropriate way.

### 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 Admissions on 01823 342409 or the Orthopaedic Outpatient appointments bookings team on 01823 342750 – select option 1 for bookings, then option 1 for T&O.

If your surgery is planned to take place at Yeovil Hospital, please contact 01935 384319.