



Post Laparoscopic Patient Information

Laparoscopic (Keyhole) surgery has a proven safety record. It has many advantages over more traditional (open) surgery, in particular with respect to infection, bleeding and healing rates. However any hospital admission carries a certain risk.

This factsheet is designed to reassure you throughout the recovery process and to make you aware of any abnormality in the healing process in the unlikely event that a complication should arise.

Discharge from hospital

If you are having a diagnostic laparoscopy, you should be able to go home on the same day.

When you wake from the anaesthetic, your nurse will want to make sure that you are not in pain, that you have had something to eat and drink and that you have passed urine before you are discharged. This usually takes between 4 to 6 hours.

When you go home, make sure you are not alone and someone can stay with you overnight. You should not drive as you are legally not allowed to drive for 24 hours after sedation. You should also not make any important decisions.

If you have had a simple procedure as part of an operative laparoscopy, you may be able to go home on the same day or you may be asked to stay in hospital overnight.

Anaesthesia

After-effects of general anaesthesia; most modern anaesthetics are short-lasting. You should not have, or suffer from, any after-effects for more than a day after your operation.

During the first 24 hours you may feel more sleepy than usual and your judgement may be impaired. You are also advised not to drink any alcohol within the first 24 hours of leaving hospital.

Scarring

You will have a few small scars on different parts of your abdomen – one scar will usually be in your tummy button. Each scar will be between 0.5cm and 1cm long.

Stitches and dressings

Your cuts will be closed by stitches, staples, clips or glue and be covered with a dressing.

Glue and some stitches can dissolve by themselves. However, other stitches, clips or staples need to be removed by a healthcare professional and this is usually done by the Practice Nurse at your GP surgery about 5 to 7 days after your operation. You will be given information about this before you are discharged from hospital.

Gynaecological procedures

If you have received a gynaecological procedure, you may get a small amount of vaginal bleeding for 24 to 48 hours. This is normal and you should bring your own sanitary products with you.

Pain and pain relief

You can expect some pain and discomfort in your lower abdomen for the first few days after your operation. You may also have some pain in your shoulder. These are common side-effects of the operation.

Before being discharged from hospital, you may be provided with painkillers for any pain you are experiencing. Please note that if you are prescribed painkillers which contain codeine or dihydrocodeine, these can make you sleepy, slightly sick and constipated.

Formation of blood clots

There is a small risk of blood clots forming in the veins in your legs and pelvis (deep vein thrombosis) after any operation. These clots can travel to the lungs (pulmonary embolism) which could be serious. You can reduce your risk of clots by:

1. being as mobile as you can as early as you can after your operation
2. doing exercises when you are resting, for example:
 - pumping each foot up and down briskly for 30 seconds by moving your ankle
 - moving each foot in a circular motion for 30 seconds
 - bending and straightening your legs – one leg at a time, three times for each leg.

You may also be given other measures to reduce the risk of a clot developing, particularly if you are overweight or have other health issues. These may include:

1. a daily injection of a blood thinning agent. Your GP will advise you on the length of time you should take this for
2. graduated compression stockings. The stockings should be worn day and night until your movement has improved and your mobility is no longer significantly reduced.

3. What can slow down my recovery?

It can take longer to recover from a laparoscopy if:

- you had health problems before your operation; for example, patients with diabetes may heal more slowly and may be more prone to infection
- you smoke; you are at increased risk of getting a chest or wound infection during their recovery: smoking can delay the healing process
- you were overweight at the time of your operation; if you are overweight it can take longer to recover from the effects of anaesthesia and there can be a higher risk of complications such as infection and thrombosis
- there were any complications during your operation.

Recovering after an operation is a very personal experience. If you are following all the advice you have been given but do not think you are at the stage you should be, please discuss this with your GP.

Potential complications and aftercare

While most patients recover well after a laparoscopy, complications can occur and if so, you should seek medical advice from your GP, the Out of Hours GP service, Western Isles Hospital, or NHS 24.

You **must** seek medical attention if you experience any of the following symptoms in the morning after your laparoscopic procedure:

- Increasing abdominal pain, or a feeling that your stomach is being stretched
- Vomiting or nausea, this may be caused by damage to your bowel or bladder, in which case you will need to be admitted to hospital
- A painful, red, swollen, hot leg or difficulty bearing weight on your legs: this may be caused by a deep vein thrombosis (DVT). If you have shortness of breath, chest pain or cough up blood, it could be a sign that a blood clot has travelled to the lungs (pulmonary embolus). If you have these symptoms, you should seek medical help immediately
- A feeling that your heart is racing or is beating in an abnormal way
- Dizziness on standing or a fainting episode
- Burning or stinging when you pass urine or pass urine frequently: this may be due to a bladder infection. Treatment is with a course of antibiotics
- A feeling that you want to pass urine but can't
- Have poor urine output
- Red and painful skin around your scars: this may be caused by a wound infection. Treatment is with a course of antibiotics
- If you also have a temperature
- If there is no improvement in your symptoms: you should expect a gradual improvement of your symptoms over time. If this is not the case, you should seek medical advice
- Reluctance to move
- Poor appetite
- Pain that cannot be controlled with paracetamol or Ibuprofen.

If you have any further questions or would like to discuss concerns around work, exercise, sex, driving or travel, please discuss this with your surgical team before being discharged from hospital.

Useful contacts

Western Isles hospital	(01851) 704704
NHS 24	Freephone 111 (for GP Out-of-Hours service)
Emergency	999

Further information

If you have any queries about your procedure please contact the Day Surgery Unit on (01851) 704704 ext. 2424 between 8am-5pm.

We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide. If you would like to tell us about your experience:

- speak to a member of staff
- visit our website: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/feedback or share your story at: www.careopinion.org.uk or 0800 122 31 35
- tel. 01851 708069 or 07814 071868 Monday-Friday between 9am-5.30pm.