

General Aftercare Guide

General recovery guidance that applies after most procedures. Your procedure's own aftercare leaflet and your surgeon's instructions come first.

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Your surgeon's instructions and your procedure's own aftercare leaflet are personal to you and override this general guide.

EMERGENCY

Who to contact

For a life-threatening emergency, call **999**. Otherwise, use the numbers below.

Office hours (Mon–Fri 9am–5pm): 0131 376 3785

Evenings and weekends during your early recovery: Out-of-Hours Nurse Advice Line 07405322689 — our nurse can advise you, contact your surgeon, or direct you to NHS services.

After your early recovery period: call the hospital in office hours, or NHS 24 on 111.

Email: hello@waterfronthospital.co.uk

Had your surgery at Spire Shawfair Park (overnight stay)? Contact Spire directly using the number on your discharge paperwork — not the Waterfront advice line.

When to get help — your traffic light guide

RED

Call 999 or go to A&E now if you have:

These can be life-threatening. Do not wait to call the hospital first.

- Difficulty breathing or chest pain
- Heavy bleeding that will not stop or soaks through dressings
- Rapidly increasing swelling on one side, or one area suddenly much more swollen or bruised than the other (possible haematoma)
- A high temperature with confusion or unusual drowsiness
- Coughing up blood
- Severe allergic reaction

AMBER

Call our nursing team now — do not wait — if you have:

- Increasing pain not settled by your painkillers
- Signs of infection — spreading redness, warmth, a wound that is hot, swollen or leaking
- A wound edge starting to separate
- Fever, chills, or feeling generally unwell
- Persistent nausea or vomiting
- Calf pain, swelling or warmth (possible DVT — call urgently; 999 if breathless or chest pain)

Office hours (Mon–Fri 9am–5pm): 0131 376 3785

Out of hours (early recovery): 07405322689. If you stayed overnight at Spire, contact Spire directly.

GREEN

Normal

Mild swelling, bruising and discomfort are normal. Keep following your aftercare advice.

After Surgery — Key Points

Driving

Do not drive for at least 24–48 hours after a general anaesthetic, and not while taking strong painkillers. After that, only drive when you could do an emergency stop comfortably — and check your insurance covers you.

Exercise and activity

Rest is crucial for the first few days. Gradually increase activity as tolerated. Avoid heavy lifting, strenuous exercise, and contact sports for 4–6 weeks depending on the surgery.

Pain relief after surgery

You will be given pain-relief medicines to take home, usually paracetamol with a stronger painkiller if needed. Take them as the label says — the nursing team will go through this with you before you leave, including how to step down as the pain eases. If pain is not controlled, contact us. Paracetamol and ibuprofen can usually be taken together; take ibuprofen with food.

Wound care

Keep your wound clean and dry. Follow your surgeon's instructions for dressing changes. Watch for signs of infection such as increasing redness, warmth, swelling, or discharge.

Blood clots (VTE) — how you can help

Surgery and sitting still raise the small risk of a clot. You can help: keep gently moving and take short walks, drink plenty of water, and wear the anti-embolism (compression) stockings we give you as advised — for most people, until you are fully mobile, around 3 weeks. Tell us if you take the pill, HRT, or have had a clot before.

Flying after surgery

As a typical guide, avoid long-haul flights (over ~4 hours) for about 4 weeks after bigger operations. Flying sooner? Discuss with us first. Your operation's own aftercare page gives the timing for your procedure. When you do fly, stay hydrated, move regularly and wear compression socks.

Your First 24 Hours

After a general anaesthetic or sedation your judgement can be affected for up to 24 hours. During that time do not drive, sign documents, cook or use machinery, care for children or dependants alone, drink alcohol, or post on social media — even if you feel fine. Your responsible adult should stay with you overnight.