WATERFRONT
PRIVATE HOSPITAL

PATIENT INFORMATION · BEFORE SURGERY

Preparing for Your Surgery

A guide to help you prepare physically and mentally for your surgical procedure.

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Your pre-assessment call and admission letter are personal to you and override this guide. If anything here differs from your letter, follow your letter.

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.

Preparation Timeline at a Glance

4 weeks before

- Stop all smoking, vaping and nicotine
- Raise the combined pill, HRT or weight-loss injections at your pre-assessment call
- Arrange time off work and childcare if needed

2 weeks before

- Stop over-the-counter ibuprofen, naproxen or aspirin and supplements (about 10–14 days before; check with the nursing team)
- Arrange your transport and responsible adult
- Buy anything you may need for recovery

1 week before

- Prepare your home for recovery
- If you use a GLP-1 injection, follow the plan agreed at pre-assessment (usually omitting the dose for about a week)
- Check the fasting times on your admission letter

Day of surgery

- Follow the fasting times on your admission letter
- Take your usual morning tablets with a small sip of water if we have told you to
- Wear comfortable clothing and arrive on time
- Bring your documents, medicines and dressing gown

Before Your Surgery

- Tell us your full medical history and any allergies
- Give us a complete list of everything you take, including supplements
- Raise the combined pill, HRT or weight-loss injections at pre-assessment
- Arrange transport to and from the hospital
- Arrange a responsible adult to take you home and stay overnight
- Prepare your home for recovery
- Follow the fasting times on your admission letter
- Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing
- Remove jewellery and piercings (a wedding band may stay) and come without make-up

Medicines, Supplements and Recreational Drugs

NSAIDs and aspirin

If you **buy** ibuprofen, naproxen or aspirin yourself for aches and pains, stop them about 10–14 days before — check with the nursing team.

If aspirin (including low-dose 'baby' aspirin) or another blood thinner has been prescribed for your heart or circulation, do not stop it without speaking to us and your prescriber first. Prescribed medicines continue as normal unless your surgeon or prescriber specifically tells you otherwise — this is confirmed at your pre-operative assessment. Paracetamol, taken as the label says, is fine to continue.

Vitamins and supplements

We usually ask you to stop supplements about 10–14 days before — this includes fish oil, vitamin E, St John's Wort, garlic, ginkgo and ginseng. Please tell us about everything you take, even if it seems harmless. A standard multivitamin is usually fine to continue.

Prescribed medicines

Most people keep taking their usual medicines. On the day, you can usually take your normal morning tablets with a small sip of water. We confirm exactly which to take, and which to hold, at your pre-assessment call. Please tell us about blood thinners, blood pressure, diabetes and mental-health medicines.

The combined pill and HRT

If you take the combined contraceptive pill or HRT, please raise it at pre-assessment so we can talk it through. There is no single rule.

- The combined pill slightly increases the risk of a clot (DVT). The increase is real but small, and pregnancy carries a higher clot risk than the pill — so stopping is not automatically safer. Whether to stop is your choice. If you do want to remove the extra risk, stopping about 4 weeks before surgery is what does it — but arrange other contraception first.
- Progestogen-only methods (mini-pill, implant, injection, hormonal coil) do not carry this extra risk and do not need to be stopped.
- HRT: patches, gels and sprays carry little or no extra clot risk and usually need not be stopped. Tablet HRT is more like the pill. Stopping HRT can make you feel unwell, so many women reasonably continue — we will help you weigh it up.

We will not tell you what to do here; we will give you the facts and decide together.

Weight-loss and diabetes injections (GLP-1 agonists)

If you use a GLP-1 injection (such as Wegovy, Ozempic or Mounjaro), tell us at pre-assessment. These medicines slow the stomach emptying, which the anaesthetist needs to know about. Our anaesthetists usually advise omitting the dose for about a week before surgery. The most important thing is simply that the anaesthetist knows you take one, so they can take the right precautions on the day.

Recreational drugs

Please be honest about any recreational drug use — it changes how anaesthetic drugs work and it is safer if we know. As a general guide, avoid cannabis, cocaine and other drugs for at least a week before, and never on the day. Nothing you tell us goes further than your care team.

Smoking, Alcohol and Diet

Smoking, vaping and nicotine

Stop all smoking, vaping and nicotine for at least 4 weeks before and 4 weeks after. Nicotine narrows blood vessels and slows healing — this includes the morning of surgery. Ask your GP or us about support to stop.

Alcohol

Cut down in the weeks before, and avoid alcohol completely for at least 48 hours before. If you drink heavily, tell us — stopping earlier makes a real difference. Avoid alcohol while taking strong painkillers afterwards.

Diet

Eat well, with protein at each meal, in the run-up. Being well nourished helps you heal.

Preparing Your Home and Your Responsible Adult

After a general anaesthetic or sedation, a responsible adult (18+) must take you home — a car or taxi is fine, but not public transport — and stay with you overnight. They should not be someone who has also had surgery recently or is taking strong painkillers.

- Stock your kitchen with easily prepared meals and snacks
- Ensure your bedroom is on the ground floor if possible
- Remove any tripping hazards and ensure good lighting
- Prepare comfortable clothing that is easy to put on
- Have paracetamol and any prescribed pain relief medicines available
- Arrange help with household tasks and childcare if needed

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.

What to Bring & Wear on the Day

What to wear

- Comfortable loose clothing (a front-opening top after breast or arm surgery)
- Easy, low-heeled shoes
- Come without make-up, especially for facial surgery, and remove gel or acrylic nails from at least one hand so we can monitor you
- Remove all jewellery, watches and piercings except a wedding band. Leave valuables at home

What to bring

- Your written quotation or treatment letter
- Your usual medicines in their original packaging
- A list of allergies
- A dressing gown and slippers, to walk between your room and theatre (we can provide these if needed)
- Glasses or hearing-aid case, phone charger and some entertainment
- Post-surgery compression garments (breast and gynaecomastia patients)

Fasting Instructions

Your admission letter gives your exact times and overrides this guide.

Typical pattern for a morning list: No food, sweets, chewing gum or milk products from midnight.

Water: After you stop eating, keep drinking still water, up to 200ml an hour — being well hydrated helps you recover and lowers clot risk. Stop water by the time on your letter (often around 06:00), finishing with a last 200ml then.

Following your fasting times matters: getting it wrong can mean your operation is postponed. Modern anaesthetic guidance encourages clear fluids until close to theatre, so please do keep sipping water up to your cut-off unless your letter says otherwise.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I take my regular medications before surgery?

Most people keep taking their usual medicines, and on the day you can usually take your normal morning tablets with a small sip of water. We confirm exactly which to take, and which to hold, at your pre-assessment call. Never stop prescribed aspirin or a blood thinner without speaking to us and your prescriber first.

What should I do if I develop a cold before surgery?

Contact our nursing team. A respiratory infection may mean postponing your surgery to reduce the risk of complications.

How long before surgery must I fast?

Your admission letter gives your exact times and overrides this guide. As a typical pattern for a morning list: no food, sweets, chewing gum or milk products from midnight, then keep drinking still water, up to 200ml an hour, until the cut-off time in your letter, with a final 200ml then.

Can I wear makeup to the hospital?

No, please come without make-up, especially for facial surgery. This allows the team to monitor your skin colour during and after the procedure. Please also remove gel or acrylic nails from at least one hand.