

General Surgery

Introduction

We provide a full General Surgery service across both Whiston and St Helens Hospitals. St Helens hospital is a dedicated Day Case and Diagnostic Centre and Whiston Hospital is an acute site. The General Surgery service is provided by a specialist team of medical and nursing staff.

General Surgery is a surgical specialty that focuses mostly on abdominal contents including stomach, small intestine, large intestine, appendix and gallbladder and covers management of medical (i.e., non-surgical) problems as well as surgical problems. In addition General surgery also includes Breast surgery and management of conditions like hernias and acid reflux.

We carry out our General Surgery day case surgery at our dedicated centre at St Helens; however the main General Surgery ward for major surgery and emergencies is based at Whiston Hospital. We have a 32 bedded Ward along with a Surgical Assessment Unit consisting of 25 beds and a dedicated Ward for elective admissions with 16 beds.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than they should have to 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 by clinicians who are responsible for your care.

A recent COVID-19 infection increases your risk of lung complications or death if you have an operation under general anaesthetic. This risk reduces the longer it is since the infection. After 7 weeks the risk is no higher than someone who has not had Covid-19. However, if you still have symptoms the risk remains high. The risk also depends on your age, overall health and the type of surgery you are having.

You must follow instructions to self-isolate and take a Covid-19 test before your operation. If you have had Covid-19 up to 7 weeks before the operation you should discuss the risks and benefits of delaying it with your surgeon.

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Guidance for Patients

Treatments and services offered at the General Surgery department include:

- Inguinal Hernia repair
- Abdominal Wall Reconstruction
- Cholecystectomy
- Bowel Surgery
- Management of haemorrhoids

Take Your Medication

Medicines are widely used by the NHS to prevent and treat poor health. When medicines are not taken or used properly, it can lead to poor and worsening health and wellbeing. Before taking any medication, carefully read all the instructions on the label and ask your doctor or pharmacist for help if you are not sure how to take them.

When it comes to getting the best from our medicines, we all need to know: it's OK to ask.

<https://meandmymedicines.org.uk/>

You need to know:

- ✓ When and how to take them
- ✓ What you should and shouldn't take them with – such as alcohol or food
- ✓ Any side effects, both on its own or in combination with any other medication you're taking

What can I do?

- ✓ Learn about your medication
- ✓ Organise and plan your medication
- ✓ Take your medication as prescribed and complete the course

Read the written instructions that accompany your medication and keep in one place – in a drawer or folder – so that you know where to find them.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

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, seven days a week.

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Life Threatening Emergencies

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

GP Surgeries are still open

If you experience an increase in pain or a significant change in your symptoms, you should in the first instance contact your General Practitioner for review and advice.

GP surgeries are still open and are working differently to how they did before the COVID-19 pandemic. GP practices continue to make best use of telephone, online and video consultations. Face-to-face appointments are still being given to those who need it.

When you phone or use an online form to contact your GP surgery to make an appointment, you will be asked some questions which are designed to help staff guide you to the most appropriate clinical person to help you with your condition. This could be a nurse, clinical pharmacist, physician's associate, GP or paramedic.

A list of GP practices with relevant contact details are available on the following website:

Find a GP - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

Contact Details

Switchboard: **0151 426 1600**

Appointments: **0151 430 1234**

Admissions: **01744 647 497**