

Gynaecology – Repair of Prolapse

Introduction

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. 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.

Repair of Prolapse

Prolapse is very common. Mild prolapse often causes no symptoms and treatment is not always necessary. However, you should see your doctor if you think you may have a prolapse.

Prolapse can affect quality of life by causing symptoms such as discomfort or a feeling of heaviness. It can cause bladder and bowel problems, and sexual activity may also be affected.

Prolapse can be reduced with various lifestyle interventions including stopping smoking, weight loss, exercise and avoiding constipation, as well as avoidance of activities that may make your prolapse worse such as heavy lifting.

Treatment options to support your prolapse include physiotherapy, pessaries and surgery.

How severe your symptoms are and whether you choose to have surgery will depend on how your prolapse affects your daily life. Not everyone with prolapse needs surgery but you may want to consider surgery if other options have not adequately helped.

Surgery for prolapse aims to support the pelvic organs and to help ease your symptoms. It cannot always cure the problem completely. There are a number of possible operations; the most suitable one for you will depend on your circumstances.

Guidance for Patients

The following may ease your symptoms and stop your prolapse from becoming worse:

Lifestyle changes:

- losing weight if you are overweight
- managing a chronic cough if you have one; stopping smoking will help
- avoiding constipation; talk to your doctor about ways of helping and treating constipation
- avoiding heavy lifting; you may wish to talk to your employer if your job involves heavy lifting
- avoiding physical activity such as trampolining or high-impact exercise.
- **Pelvic floor exercises** may help to strengthen your pelvic floor muscles. You may be referred for a course of treatment to a physiotherapist who specialises in prolapse.
- **Vaginal hormone treatment (estrogen)** – if you have a mild prolapse and you have gone through the menopause; your doctor may recommend vaginal tablets or cream.

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It is important that while you are waiting for your surgery you remain as active and as medically fit as possible. If you have any long-standing conditions such as high blood pressure you should get this reviewed at your Doctor's surgery to make sure it remains well controlled. This will also help prevent any unnecessary delays when you come 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, it would be advisable to seek support to help with stopping, advice can be found at your local pharmacy or Doctor's surgery or via the Oxfordshire Stop smoking service.

Oxford University Hospitals has a dedicated free health and wellbeing support service called Here for Health for staff, patients, their families, and visitors at OUH.

Here for Health forms part of the Trust's Clinical Support Services and offer holistic health and wellbeing information and support for patients as part of their care pathway. [Here for Health - Oxford University Hospitals \(ouh.nhs.uk\)](https://ouh.nhs.uk)

Here for Health focuses on what matters to you and offer a range of support methods to help you plan for:



- giving up smoking
- becoming more active
- eating a healthy diet
- reducing alcohol intake
- self-care for general wellbeing
- managing weight.

We tailor your consultation to your individual needs, to make it as easy as possible to adopt small, sustainable, and realistic lifestyle changes to improve your health and wellbeing.

We have a wide range of resources and can help you access a variety of community services, including free stop smoking and weight management support. **01865 221429** hereforhealth@ouh.nhs.uk

NHS websites

The NHS website Live Well provides advice, tips and tools to help you make the best choices about your health and wellbeing. [Live Well - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

Healthy changes start with little changes. Whether you want to lose weight, get active or quit smoking, Better Health is here with lots of free tools and support. [Better Health - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

Oxfordshire Services

To support local Oxfordshire residents to stop smoking or lose weight, [Stop Smoking In Oxfordshire, Quit Smoking Today - Stop For Life Oxon](#) and [Home | Weight Loss Support | Achieve Oxfordshire](#) have been commissioned to provide free stop smoking and weight management support to the Oxfordshire community.

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Stop Smoking Service

[Stop Smoking In Oxfordshire, Quit Smoking Today - Stop For Life Oxon](#)

Stop for Life Oxon has been created to help you quit smoking in Oxfordshire through our free three-level support service **0800 122 3790**

If you are not ready to quit just yet but would like more information on how to protect your family, [Smoke free Homes](#), advises on how to make your home and car smoke free.

Weight Management Service

[Home](#) | [Weight Loss Support](#) | [Achieve Oxfordshire](#)

Achieve Healthy Weight Loss Oxfordshire is funded by [Oxfordshire County Council](#). We have partnered with leading weight loss providers to offer you a range of FREE programmes to help you achieve your goals. We also have valuable tools and skilled Health Practitioners to give encouragement throughout your weight loss journey.

ACHIEVE INCLUSION/EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Inclusion:

- Oxfordshire resident, working in Oxfordshire, studying in Oxfordshire or registered to an Oxfordshire GP surgery
- You must be over the age of 18
- BMI greater than 30 **OR** greater than 27.5 with a comorbidity **OR** greater 27.5 if you are from a Black, Asian and Minority (BAME) community **OR** greater than 23 if you are from a BAME community and have a comorbidity

Scroll down to use our BMI checker

Exclusion:

- You must not have accessed a free service via Achieve Oxfordshire in the last 12 months
- You must not have been a paying member of Slimming World or Weight Watchers in the last 3 months

Unfortunately, we are unable to support you via one of our services if any of the following health statuses apply to you:

- Complex diabetes*
- Known eating disorder - Other mental health conditions will be considered on a case by case basis
- Currently pregnant

[*Click here to view our full list of eligibility criteria](#)

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To check your BMI, please click on the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/bmi-calculator/>

Being Active

There are lots of ways to get or keep active across Oxfordshire including walks and cycle routes as well as activities suitable for families and older people.

[Ways to Get Active](#) | [GO Active \(getoxfordshireactive.org\)](http://GOActive(getoxfordshireactive.org))

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

The most common symptom is the sensation of a lump 'coming down'. You may also have had backache, heaviness or a dragging discomfort inside your vagina. These symptoms are often worse if you have been standing (or sitting) for a long time or at the end of the day. These symptoms often improve on lying down.

You may be able to feel or see a lump or bulge. You should see your doctor if this is the case because the prolapse may become sore, ulcerated or infected.

If your bladder has prolapsed into the vagina, you may:

- experience the need to pass urine more frequently
- have difficulty in passing urine or a sensation that your bladder is not emptying properly
- leak urine when coughing, laughing or lifting heavy objects
- have frequent urinary tract infections (cystitis).

If your bowel is affected, you may experience low back pain, constipation or incomplete bowel emptying. You may need to push back the prolapse to allow stools to pass.

Sex may be uncomfortable and you may also experience a lack of sensation during intercourse.

If you are affected by any of the conditions above, please contact your GP.

If your condition suddenly worsens whilst you are waiting you should seek advice.

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.

Life Threatening Emergencies

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

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GP surgeries

GP practice staff are also helping patients to manage their conditions at home while they wait for hospital appointments.

GP surgeries are working differently to how they did before the COVID-19 pandemic and 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.

Contact Us

Please use the following email address for My Planned Care enquiries: pals@ouh.nhs.uk