

SPINAL SURGERY SERVICES – Decompression of Lumbar Spine

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. The guidance has been written by clinicians who are responsible for your care.

Lumbar decompression surgery is a type of surgery used to treat compressed nerves in the lumbar (lower) spine. The surgery aims to improve symptoms such as persistent pain and numbness in the legs caused by pressure on the nerves in the spine. It is often used to treat:

Spinal stenosis – narrowing of a section of the spinal column, which puts pressure on the nerves inside

Slipped disc – where a damaged spinal disc presses down on an underlying nerve

Severe sciatica – where the sciatic nerve, which runs from your lower back to your feet, is irritated or compressed

Spinal injuries – such as a fracture or the swelling of tissue

Guidance for Patients

Whilst you are waiting for your spinal surgery keep moving and be as active as can within your limits of pain, this will be beneficial to you post operatively.

It is important that you stay as healthy as you can both physically and mentally while you wait for your surgery. That will help you get the best results in the long term. If you have any long-standing conditions such as high blood pressure you should get this regularly reviewed at your GP 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 or drink heavily, it would be advisable to seek support to help with stopping. The NHS website has lots of tools and support to help with losing weight, getting active, quitting smoking and drinking less, all of which are good for your health generally, but if you are due to have an operation, they can also help you to recover more quickly from it.

For help and support with losing weight visit: www.nhs.uk/better-health/lose-weight/

For advice on eating well visit: www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/

For help and support with getting or keeping active visit: www.nhs.uk/better-health/get-active/

For help and support with quitting smoking visit: www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/

For help and support with drinking less alcohol visit: www.nhs.uk/better-health/drink-less/

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

Please seek immediate medical advice if your symptoms deteriorate. Red Flags to look out for:-

- Saddle anaesthesia (loss of feeling between legs)
- Bladder disturbance, inability to urinate
- Bowel disturbance (inability to stop a bowel movement or loss of sensation when passing a stool)
- Sexual problems with erection or ejaculation (males)
- Leg pain, numbness or weakness

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.

Contact Us

Email: spinalsurgerieservice@somersetft.nhs.uk

Telephone: The spinal 'On Call' surgeon via the switchboard 01823 333444