

## Gynaecology – Anterior/Posterior Repair of Prolapse

### Introduction

The Covid-19 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. We know that it can be very difficult for many people who are waiting.

The NHS is working hard to see people as quickly as possible, but it is going to take a while before waiting times are back down to where there were before the Covid-19 pandemic began in the UK in early 2020.

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.

### Guidance for Patients

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 will need 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.

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

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### 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.

Please refer to the Generic Health Advice Document which offers advice and support on a range of items such as eating healthier, a smoke free lifestyle, pain management and mental well-being support.

### 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](http://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.

#### 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.

#### Related Symptoms

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

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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 or the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Department.

## Contact Us

### Gynaecology Specialty Administration Teams: -

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