

GYNAECOLOGY – Repair of prolapse

Introduction

We have been working hard to recover elective services as quickly as possible, transforming and integrating services and how we deliver care across Somerset, following our recent merger. 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 in consultation with clinicians who are responsible for your care.

Guidance for Patients

Whilst you are waiting for your surgery, try to avoid things that may put stress on the vagina as this can help to stop the prolapse getting worse. If you are very overweight, you should try and lose weight. You should make sure your bowels are regular and not become constipated. If you are a smoker you should stop, as it will make you prone to chest infections, which put a lot of stress on the pelvic floor and vagina. You should have been given pelvic floor exercises to do; continue with these whilst you wait: www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/womens-health/what-are-pelvic-floor-exercises/

It is anticipated you will go home on the day of surgery. Please make arrangements prior to coming into hospital for someone to collect you and take you home after your procedure. If you have a general anaesthetic, it is essential you arrange for someone to stay with you overnight.

It is important that while you are waiting for your surgery you remain as active and as medically fit as possible. This can also help you to recover more quickly afterwards. People who exercise regularly also have a lower risk of developing many long term (chronic) conditions (such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke and some cancers), and research shows that physical activity can also boost self-esteem, mood, sleep quality and energy, and can reduce stress and clinical depression.

If you have any long-standing conditions such as high blood pressure, you should get these regularly reviewed at your GP surgery to make sure they remain well controlled. This will also help to prevent any unnecessary delays when you come in 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, we'd strongly advise you to seek support to help with stopping.

The NHS website has lots of tools and support to help with your general health and fitness. Some useful websites are listed below:

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

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

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

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

More locally, Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP) have lots of information for adults, children and young people on how to be more active: [Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership - Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership \(sasp.co.uk\)](https://sasp.co.uk)

For older people Age UK offer a range of activities and exercise classes. You can find out about any classes in your local area on the Age UK website: [Age UK | The UK's leading charity helping every older person who needs us](https://www.ageuk.org.uk)

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

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

Managing pain

Some people are in pain or discomfort while they are waiting for a hospital appointment or treatment. You can find help and advice on managing ongoing pain on the NHS website: www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/how-to-get-nhs-help-for-your-pain/

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy also has helpful information on managing pain: www.csp.org.uk/public-patient

If your pain is getting worse or you are finding it difficult to cope with, contact your GP or NHS 111.

Take your medication

Continue taking your medication while waiting for your surgery, as directed by your GP and hospital specialist. When the pre-op assessment team contacts you, remember to inform them of all medicines, vitamins, herbal remedies and supplements you take, so that they can give you clear information on whether you should stop taking your usual medicines before going into hospital.

Good mental health

People sometimes feel worried or anxious before a hospital appointment or treatment. This is perfectly normal. Some people might also find that an existing mental health condition gets worse, so looking after your mental health is just as important as your physical health. You can find helpful links for mental health support on the NHS website: www.nhs.uk/mental-health/

Mental health charity Mind also has webpages about COVID-19 and your wellbeing: www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing

Talking therapies, or psychological therapies, are effective and confidential treatments delivered by fully trained and accredited NHS practitioners. They can help with common mental health problems like stress, anxiety and depression. You can self refer here: [Online Referral - Talking Therapies - Somerset NHS Foundation Trust \(somersetft.nhs.uk\)](https://www.somersetft.nhs.uk/online-referral-talking-therapies)

Patients with caring responsibilities

Waiting for hospital treatment can be a particularly worrying time for patients who are also carers for others, as they need to think also about the loved one they are caring for and make alternative arrangements for them when it is time for them to attend hospital. The Community Council for Somerset is contracted by Somerset County Council to run the Somerset Carers service. There are over 60,000 unpaid carers in Somerset. If you regularly look after someone in an unpaid capacity, Somerset Carers can support you with advice and guidance: www.ccslovesomerset.org/somerset-carers/

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If your prolapse gets significantly worse whilst waiting for your surgery please contact your GP or NHS 111 for medical review in the first instance. They will be able to advise if this is something they can support you with during your wait, or they will be able to direct you to the appropriate service to determine a management plan. If this has not helped, feel free to get in touch with us (contact details at the bottom of page) so we can review you and see how we can improve your symptoms while awaiting your procedure.

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

If your surgery is planned to take place at Musgrove Park Hospital, please contact:
OandGSecAdmin@Somersetft.nhs.uk

If your surgery is planned to take place at Yeovil Hospital, please contact: ydhgynaesecretaries@somersetft.nhs.uk