

## 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 to help you stay healthy while waiting to attend hospital and should be read in conjunction with the specialty level guidance appropriate for your condition.

## Take Your Medication

If you take regular medication, please follow the instructions you were given when it was prescribed to ensure that you stay well. Your doctor or pharmacist will be happy to answer any questions you have about your medication.

## Keep Moving

We want to support all patients who are coming into hospital to move more in the weeks leading up to their appointment or operation. This may help you to recover more quickly. Physical activity is not all about sport, anything that gets you moving is really beneficial for your health and helps build your strength and stamina for your operation. Take a look at our [Shape Up For Surgery resources](#) to help you increase your activity levels in the lead up to your operation.

We're also working with the friendly One You Leeds team, who are available to provide support and guidance to help you move more. They can offer a range of free physical activity classes including group exercise sessions and walking groups tailored to meet your fitness levels. Find out more on the [One You Leeds website](#).

If you have a health problem or long term condition, the team at Active Leeds for Health can help you to lead an active, healthy life. They deliver a range of activities to improve your strength, balance and coordination at local community hubs and leisure centres. Find out more about [Active Leeds for Health](#).

## Improve Your Health

If you're coming into hospital, it's really important to do everything you can to improve your general health. Take a look at our [Shape Up For Surgery website](#) for ideas about how you can make small changes to your lifestyle.

The team at One You Leeds also offer free support to [manage your weight](#) and [eat better](#). Maintaining a healthy weight can make a real difference to many health conditions.

At Leeds Teaching Hospitals we know that our patients who smoke need to stay overnight in hospital after surgery at least 1 day longer compared to ex-smokers. The team at One You Leeds can help you to stop smoking, with free one to one or group support from a health and wellbeing coach. Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) or Prescription Only Medication is also available for free to help you to stop smoking for good. Find out more about [support to stop smoking](#).

## My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Alcohol can weaken your immune system, putting you at risk of developing complications and prolonging your recovery from surgery. You should aim to be alcohol free for at least 24 hours before an operation. If you have become physically dependent and need to stop drinking completely, stopping overnight could be harmful. You should get advice about this from your GP and ask about any medicine you may need to do this safely. [Get alcohol support](#) - find local support if you don't think you can reduce your drinking before your operation.

## Good Mental Health

Waiting for hospital treatment can be a worrying time, so please don't delay asking for help if you are struggling with your mental health.

If you've been feeling low or very anxious and this is affecting your day-to-day life, you should consider going to see your GP (doctor).

We've also included the websites below which include a variety of ways to get support.

[MindWell](#) has self-help resources and tools to help you understand and manage problems like anxiety, stress and low moods.

The [Leeds Mental Wellbeing Service](#) offers free online courses that can help you to cope better with problems such as stress and anxiety, panic attacks and depression. The service also provides group and face-to-face sessions and workshops. If you're over 17 years of age and registered with a Leeds GP, you can self-refer on the service website.