

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

You are advised to continue with your normal prescribed medications, but you may be advised to stop some medications before your procedure, your clinician or pre-operative assessment nurse will provide you with this information.

Keep Moving

Exercise regularly. Among other benefits, better fitness levels reduce complications when having any procedure. This allows you to leave hospital and return to your normal quality of life more quickly. Keeping an active lifestyle is good for your health and if you are normally an active person it is important to keep that up before your procedure.

People with low activity levels can improve their fitness levels within as little as 4 weeks prior to their procedure. This gives you an opportunity to get fitter before your procedure and improve your chances of a better and quicker recovery.

Prevention of Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) or Pulmonary Embolism (PE) before procedure

There are natural ways and lifestyle changes you can make to lower your risk of developing blood clots, these include:

- Stay active
- Make a point of moving every 30-60 minutes to ensure you keep your blood flowing
- Regular exercise – simply walking for 30 minutes a day is a great way to keep your circulation moving
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Keep hydrated

Your doctor will assess your risk of DVT and PE when you come into hospital and develop a treatment plan. This may include prescribed medications before or after your procedure, or when you go home, to prevent blood clots.

Improve Your Health

- **Stick to healthy foods.** Your body needs good nutrition to fight infection and heal following your procedure.
- **Avoid dehydration.** Drink at least six-eight glasses of fluid per day, preferably water.
- **Avoid shaving or waxing before your procedure.** This increases the risk of getting a wound infection. If hair needs to be removed for your procedure, it will be done in the hospital.
- **Avoid constipation.** Drink plenty of fluids and increase the amount of fibre in your diet. If this does not help you can attend your local pharmacy for over-the-counter remedies.

Smoking

If you are coming into hospital for a procedure, and you are a smoker, we strongly advise you to stop smoking as soon as possible. This will help to improve wound healing and lung function. Now is a better time than ever to stop smoking. Smoking before a procedure puts you at a higher risk for post-operative heart attacks, stroke, blood clots, pneumonia and even death.

[Quit smoking - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Alcohol

Alcohol can have many effects on your body but importantly it can reduce your body's ability to heal. Make sure you are drinking within the recommended limits or lower to improve your body's ability to heal after your procedure.

[Alcohol support - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Good Mental Health

It is normal to be anxious about having a procedure. Relaxation, mindfulness, and breathing exercises can all help. There is some further advice on the below website.

[Self-help - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Please watch this useful video from the Royal College of Anaesthetists for preparing for a procedure 'fitter, better, sooner'.

[Preparing for surgery: Fitter Better Sooner - YouTube](#)

If you have any questions then you can contact the clinical team on the number on your letter or contact our Patient Helpline on 01270 826400, email:

MCHTPatientHelpline@mcht.nhs.uk