

Staying healthy

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has meant that there are more people waiting for an operation. This means that some people are waiting a long time for a hospital appointment or for treatment.

Staff across the NHS are working hard to see people as quickly as possible. It will take a long time before waiting times are back to where they were before the pandemic.

While you wait for your procedure, we want to make sure that you have information and support to keep you as healthy as possible. This will ensure that you are ready for your procedure and get better sooner.

Any information your clinician and their team have sent you should be followed before this general information. Copies of all our patient leaflets are available on our website here:

www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/patients/patient-information-publications/

What can I do while I wait for my operation?

Eating well and having a healthy lifestyle will help you feel your best and make a difference both to your recovery from your procedure and longer-term health and wellbeing.

If your clinician has given you specific advice, please follow this. If you are unsure how it can be combined with the following general advice, please contact your clinician or their team.

We encourage everyone to maintain as healthy and active a lifestyle as possible. Key to this is:

1. Healthy eating:

- Eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day
- Base your meals on potatoes, bread, rice, pasta or other starchy carbohydrates – choose wholegrain versions where possible
- Have some dairy (or dairy alternatives) such as cheese, yoghurt and fromage frais – choose lower fat and lower sugar options
- Eat some beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins (including 2 portions of fish every week, 1 of which should be oily, e.g. mackerel, salmon and sardines).
- Cut down on saturated fat - choose unsaturated oils and spreads and eat in small amounts.
Unsaturated fats are usually from plant sources, e.g. sunflower oil, rapeseed oil, and olive oil.

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- Drink 6 to 8 cups/glasses of fluid a day, do not get thirsty
- If eating and drinking foods and drinks high in sugar – have these less often and in small amounts
- Eat less salt. Lots of foods have added salt in them. Use food labels to work out the amounts.
- Get active and be a healthy weight
- Do not skip breakfast

2. Taking your medication:

Please follow the advice of your clinician. They will need to know details of all the medication you are taking, and any changes made – this includes any medication prescribed by your GP or other doctors. It may also include any natural remedies you are choosing to use.

3. Improving your mental and physical health by:

- **Exercising regularly.** Better fitness levels reduce complications when having any procedure. People with an active lifestyle should try to maintain it before their procedure. If you have lower activity levels, you can improve within 4 weeks before your procedure.
- **Stopping smoking.** Our sites and grounds are no-smoking zones. We strongly recommend you stop smoking as soon as possible. Doing this this will make a major difference to your recovery and longer-term health. Follow the links above to find the wide range of support that is available.
- **Drinking less alcohol.** Make sure you are drinking within the recommended limits (see: www.drinkaware.co.uk). If you are having any form of pain-relief / anaesthetic as part of your procedure, you should avoid drinking alcohol in the days before your admission.

Further information

Information and support services on how to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle, and support available locally, can be found through the links below:

- NHS Live Well guidance: www.nhs.uk/live-well/
- Leicester City Council: www.leicester.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/public-health/
- Leicestershire County Council: www.leicestershire.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing
- Rutland County Council: www.rutland.gov.uk/my-services/health-and-family

Your local GP Surgery may have details of more services available to you locally on their website ([Find My GP](#)).