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216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk



We are currently working towards a smoke-free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS Stop Smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

Cambridge University Hospitals **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Department of Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery Ward M5

Patient Discharge Information Neck dissection

Document history

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Discharge information

You will be discharged from hospital approximately 5-10 days after your operation.

You will be discharged from hospital with stitches in your neck wound. This is normal practice and the stitches will need removing up to two weeks after surgery. This can be done either at the Plastic Surgery dressing clinic or by your local Practice Nurse. This will be discussed with you at your time of discharge by the ward nurses.

It is also common for your surgeon to prescribe a topical ointment to be put on your wound site. This ointment is called polyfax and is used to keep the wound soft and reduce scarring. Your discharge nurse will talk through any medications with you at discharge.

You may shower upon discharge unless instructed otherwise by your consultant. Refrain directing the water directly on your wounds and only pat dry with a towel.

An appointment will be sent to you in the post to attend the Outpatients Department in approximately six weeks time to see your consultant or a member of his team.

At this appointment your surgeon will inform you of the pathology results. Any further treatment that you require will be explained to you at this visit.

If there are signs of a seroma (a collection of fluid that sometimes develops in the body after surgery), it is important that you contact the ward directly. You may need to be seen either on the ward or in clinic by a doctor, as this may require draining. Signs of seroma include swelling, tightness and possibly leaking of fluid from the wound site.

Depending on your type of work it is recommended you have approximately four to six weeks off work. The ward can issue you with a sick certificate upon request, or you can obtain one from your GP.

Discharge advice

Pain relief – Some discomfort after surgery is to be expected. You may have been given pain killers on discharge. Continue taking these as instructed on the packet. If you did not receive pain killers on discharge, it may be because you did not require any at that time. In this situation, if you do require pain relief paracetamol is advised.

Driving – You should avoid driving for four to six weeks. You should check with your insurance company to confirm your insurance remains valid.

Household chores – You are advised to refrain from any heavy pulling and pushing, from activities as vacuuming, pushing shopping trolleys and hanging out washing. These activities need to be re-introduced gradually.

Complications

It is important for you to be aware of the signs and symptoms of wound infection. These may include

- Redness
- Swelling
- Fever
- Wound discharge
- Pain that is not relieved by your normal pain killers or gets steadily worse.

If any of these symptoms occur, contact your GP or Ward M5 on **01223 348525** for advice. If an infection does occur antibiotics may be prescribed.