NHS
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Information for patients and carers

Post Operative Advice Following Pituitary (Transsphenoidal) Surgery

This leaflet explains what to expect after your operation, how to look after yourself at home, and when you should seek medical advice.

If you have any questions or are worried about your recovery, please contact the neurosurgical specialist nurse or the endocrine specialist nurse using the contact details provided at the end of this leaflet.

Follow up care after your Pituitary (Transsphenoidal) Surgery

You must have a blood test 5 days after your operation.

This is to check your sodium levels, which can sometimes change after pituitary surgery. You will be asked to:

Attend the Royal Preston Hospital Blood Clinic, (opening times Monday-Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm). No appointment is needed (this is a walk-in service).
Please also make sure you bring the blood request form you were given before leaving hospital.

You will also need another blood test about 6–8 weeks after surgery to check how well your pituitary gland is working. This will be arranged after your discharge.

Steroid (hydrocortisone) tablets

After surgery, many patients are prescribed 'Hydrocortisone'. This replaces cortisol, a hormone normally controlled by the pituitary gland.

Before you leave the hospital, your cortisol level will be checked.

- **If your cortisol level is normal**, your Hydrocortisone will be stopped
- **If your cortisol level is low**, you will continue taking Hydrocortisone tablets

You will be given a short supply of Hydrocortisone from the hospital. You should remain on Hydrocortisone unless you are advised to stop it. Further supplies can be obtained from your GP.

IMPORTANT: Do not stop taking Hydrocortisone unless your Endocrine Team advises you to do so.

Stopping steroids suddenly can make you seriously unwell.

Information for patients taking Hydrocortisone

If you become unwell while taking Hydrocortisone and develop any of the following::

- A high fever
- An illness requiring antibiotics
- Vomiting or diarrhoea
- An illness that keeps you in bed
- A significant injury or trauma

Double your daily hydrocortisone dose until you recover. This may take a few days.

If you have not started to feel better after 48 hours, please contact your GP or the endocrine team for further advice.

Do not stop taking your hydrocortisone.

If you are vomiting and unable to take your tablets, please seek seek urgent medical attention via an Emergency Department.

Endocrine test (Short Synacthen Test – SST)

Approximately 6 weeks after surgery, you will be invited for a Short Synacthen Test (SST). This checks whether your body has recovered enough to stop taking Hydrocortisone. Information about the test will be sent with your appointment.

MRI brain scan

An MRI scan will usually be arranged 3-4 months after your operation. Occasionally, it may be performed sooner if there are concerns about your vision

What is normal after surgery?

Feeling tired

Feeling tired is very common. Recovery takes time. Recover gradually by:

- Increasing activity, a little each day
- Getting plenty of rest
- Avoiding overdoing things

Recovery takes time.

Nose care

Your nose may feel:

- Blocked or stuffy
- Sore
- Different when smelling or tasting food

It is also normal to notice:

- Small amounts of blood-stained mucus
- Light spotting when wiping your nose

IMPORTANT - For 2–4 weeks after surgery:

- **Do NOT blow your nose**
- Sneeze with your mouth open if possible
- Avoid heavy straining

Your team may advise you to use sodium chloride (saline) nasal rinses or sprays to help with healing. Follow the instructions you have been given

Seek urgent medical advice if:

- You develop a nosebleed that will not stop after a few minutes
- You notice clear watery fluid leaking from your nose, especially if it tastes salty

This could be cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) and should be assessed immediately

Headaches

Mild headaches are common. You can usually take Paracetamol as directed on the packet (maximum 8 tablets in 24 hours).

Seek urgent advice if you develop:

- A sudden severe headache
- A headache that rapidly gets worse
- Severe headache with vomiting or confusion

Driving

You must not drive until you feel fully recovered. You can usually drive after transsphenoidal pituitary surgery without informing the DVLA, provided:

- You are medically fit
- You have no new problems with your vision

Always make sure you feel safe and comfortable before driving.

Flying

If your recovery has been straightforward, you can usually fly 4 weeks after surgery. If you have had complications, ask your neurosurgeon before travelling.

Follow up appointment

You will normally be seen in a combined clinic with your:

- Endocrinologist
- Neurosurgeon

This appointment is usually 3–4 months after your surgery. If tests are arranged at 6 weeks' post op you will also have an appointment with the Endocrine team shortly after this.

When should I seek urgent medical care?

Contact the Neurosurgical Team or attend the Emergency Department immediately if you develop:

- A clear watery leak from your nose
- A nosebleed that will not stop
- A sudden severe headache
- New or worsening problems with your vision
- Persistent vomiting
- Confusion, extreme drowsiness or seizures
- High fever or signs of infection
- You cannot keep your Hydrocortisone tablets down because of vomiting

Contact Details

Neurosurgical Specialist Nurse - **01772524992**
Endocrine Specialist Nurse - **01772523533**
Emergency (Out of Hours) - Attend your nearest Emergency Department or call 999 if you are seriously unwell

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk
www.nhs.uk
www.accessable.co.uk
www.patient.co.uk
www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware
https://bepartofresearch.nihr.ac.uk/

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is not responsible for the content of external internet sites.

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking this will include Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal and the opportunity to speak to a nurse or advisor from the specialist Tobacco and Alcohol Care Team.

If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**

Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.
This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.

Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:
patientexperienceandinvolvem@LTHTR.nhs.uk

Department: Neurosurgery and Endocrinology
Division: Surgery
Production date: August 2026
Review date: August 2029
JR 1511 v1