

# Information for patients and carers

## Plastic Surgery Discharge Advice Ward 4

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## Pre-discharge

Before you are discharged from hospital you should have been assessed by the surgical team as being medically fit for discharge; however, this may still involve some ongoing treatment.

A discharge facilitator may also be involved in your discharge planning.

## Medication

Prior to your discharge home the surgical team will review and amend any medication that may be required.

These will be checked by the ward pharmacist and a discharge letter will be sent to your GP confirming any alterations which may have been made during your hospital stay. You will also be provided with a copy of the letter sent to your GP.

## Analgesia (pain relief)

On discharge you may be sent home with medicines for pain relief.

Generally, you will be discharged home with 1 week's supply.

If further analgesia is required, then a further supply should be obtained via your own GP.

You must follow all medication leaflet advice and contact your GP if any reactions or sensitivities to any medication occur.

You can also make enquires via the NHS 111 service.

## Oral antibiotics

On discharge, you may also be sent home with oral antibiotics prescribed by the surgical team.

Always follow the advice leaflet provided with your medication.

Please contact your GP should you have any reactions or sensitivities to your medication.

You can also make enquires via the NHS 111 service.

## Wound care and dressings

On discharge, you may require further wound care.

A follow up appointment may be made for the Charles Beard Dressing Clinic or the Burns Clinic. Alternatively, a follow up may be arranged with the community district nurses team, practice nurse or treatment room nurse.

Your treatment plan will be included in your discharge information letter.

## Wound care

You must keep your dressings clean and dry on discharge unless stated otherwise by the health care professionals. You must also avoid touching your wound to reduce the risk of infection. Please obtain further advice if you develop any of the following:

- Redness to the area
- Swelling
- Persistent and increased levels of pain
- Fever or temperature
- A feeling of burning or excessive heat to the area
- Excessive leakage of the wound or an offensive smell

These may be signs that you have an infection and will need a further review from the surgical team and possibly further treatment. Signs of Sepsis can be obtained from the NHS sepsis website.

It is important to seek medical advice from Ward 4, NHS 111, your GP or Urgent Care.

## Stitches/sutures

These are generally removed within 2 weeks and a follow up appointment will be arranged for these to be removed, as your post-operative instructions state.

Some stitches/sutures may be dissolvable; you will be given further information and advice on discharge.

## Bleeding

It is normal to have some seepage of blood on your dressings following surgery.

If you have a very active bleed, in large amounts where your dressing becomes sodden then you should seek medical advice.

Please apply direct pressure for 10-20 minutes, if this does not stop the bleeding, call for advice.

If a wound continues to bleed profusely, then you should call 111 or 999 for urgent assistance.

## Elevation advice

Following any surgical operation most people develop some swelling to the area.

Please follow the below advice for the various areas:

### Head

It is advisable that you sit and sleep sat upright where possible, with your head elevated on at least 2-3 pillows.

### Feet/legs

It is advisable to elevate your leg/s on a foot stool or whilst sitting on your sofa elevate with extra pillows. Please ensure your heels are free from pressure, to avoid any damage to that area.

### Hands/arms

You may be given a sling on discharge, please utilise this as advised by the surgical team. Please do not dangle your arm as this may increase the pain and swelling.

At rest on the sofa or in bed, you could elevate your arm/arms on 2-3 pillows.

## Smoking

Please avoid smoking as this can affect wound healing. If you need further advice, please contact Smokefree Lancashire, details below.

## Physiotherapy

Some patients will require a physiotherapy review prior to their discharge home.

The physiotherapist will give you instructions and advice on discharge.

Any future concerns, please contact the department following discharge.

## Occupational therapy

An assessment may also be carried out to assess if any equipment may be required for your discharge home.

## Scars

There is a possibility of scarring with all operations.

After your wound has healed, you should massage your scar daily 4-5 times daily with a non-scented moisturising cream to reduce further scar thickening.

Please ensure you wash the areas at least twice a day, with non-scented soap and then pat dry with a clean towel.

It is advisable to avoid sunlight to all areas; we advise that you cover the healed wounds with factor 50 sunscreen or sunblock.

If you require a scar management referral, this can be discussed within your follow up appointments and the nurse will refer you to the scar management team.

## Hand therapy

A referral to the hand therapy team may be indicated in your post-operative instructions. It is important that you follow the instructions pre and post discharge to reduce the risk of any further damage.

## Outpatient

Following surgery, some patients will not require an outpatient appointment.

If a further outpatient appointment is required, this will be sent to you in the post with a reminder via a text message.

The medical staff will decide if an outpatient appointment is required.

## Travel abroad

Following any surgical procedure or injury, it is advisable that you follow the instructions from the surgical teams. It is possible that they may advise against travel.

To ensure you are covered prior to travel, we would advise you to contact your travel insurance provider to inform them of any recent surgery or injury.

## Driving

Following any surgical procedure or injury, we advise that you do not drive and follow instructions and advice from the medical team.

You should also inform with your car insurance provider before recommencing driving, as you may not be covered if you drive with an injury.

## Returning to work

Please do not return to work until you are advised to do so by your surgical team. You will generally be given a doctor's fit note on discharge. Further notes can be obtained from your own GP.

You should then obtain a fit to return to work form, to enable you to recommence work.

## Exercise

Please follow the post-operative instructions from your surgical team on discharge.

## Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact:

Ward 4: **01772 522244**

Ward 4 Dressing Clinic: **01772 523542**

Physiotherapy /Occupational therapy: **01772 522379**

## Sources of further information

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware)

[www.sepsis.nhs.uk](http://www.sepsis.nhs.uk)

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[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets](http://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 new leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:

[patientexperienceandinvolve@LTHTR.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperienceandinvolve@LTHTR.nhs.uk)

**Department:** Plastic Surgery & Burns Facility – Ward 4

**Division:** Surgery

**Production date:** June 2025

**Review date:** June 2028

**JR 1312 v1**