



WATERFRONT

PRIVATE HOSPITAL

PREPARING FOR YOUR SURGERY

We provide instructions that can start as early as two weeks before your surgery. These help limit unwanted medical events (complications) during and after surgery. This information will also help your body and mind prepare for surgery and healing.

Medications, Supplements, and Recreational drugs

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) - Avoid medications containing aspirin (including baby aspirin), ibuprofen or other NSAIDs for 10-14 days before surgery. These medications may increase bleeding. It takes time for the medications to get out of your system and for your system to return to its baseline level of functioning.

Supplements - There is no problem with taking supplements and multivitamins in the run-up to your surgery (weeks and months in advance), but **you should stop ALL supplements (vitamins, herbal and homoeopathic) for 10-14 days before surgery.** There is little evidence that taking supplements 1-2 weeks before surgery is helpful, and many can interfere with anaesthesia, bleeding time, immune function, and healing time.

Prescribed medications - Medications prescribed by your GP (mentioned in the clinic letter) should be taken as normal unless advised otherwise.



Street or 'recreational' drugs, such as heroin, LSD and cocaine, can strongly interact with the anaesthetic. Cocaine and ecstasy are two drugs that affect the nervous system. They may excite your heart, producing dangerous swings in blood pressure and heart rate during and after the operation.

You may need to wait two to four weeks before resuming herbal supplements and over-the-counter medications. However, you may take ibuprofen if prescribed for pain control, as evidence suggests that it does not increase the risk of bleeding **after** plastic surgery procedures.

Smoking, Alcohol, and Presurgical diet

Nicotine in cigarettes (and vaping products) reduces blood flow to the tissues and negatively affects healing. Stop smoking (and using nicotine-containing products) at least 3-4 weeks before surgery and refrain from using them for at least that length of time after surgery.

Alcohol can interfere with medications and thin out blood, leading to excessive bleeding. So, refrain from alcohol a week before and two weeks after surgery.

A healthy and balanced diet should be maintained for a few weeks before surgery. The best foods are whole foods, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, fish, eggs, beans, avocados, nuts, seeds and whole grains. Avoid processed foods and refined carbohydrates, which can promote inflammation. You can take supplements and multivitamins but remember to stop these 10-14 days before surgery.

Friends & Family

Most relatives and friends become more supportive once you have decided to proceed with surgery.

It is always helpful if you are in a position where you can tell friends or family about your decision to have surgery. If you find yourself in a position where you have a complication or a problem – it is much easier if your friends/ family are already aware that you have had surgery.

For the first 24 hours after anaesthesia, you may have memory lapses and slow reaction time. Only make important decisions the following day. Please arrange for a family member or friend to stay with you for a night or two to help. **You must have a responsible adult with you for the first night if you have a general anaesthetic for your surgery.**

Managing anxiety and stress before surgery

“I’m freaking out. Can you help me before surgery?”

It is normal to feel anxious before surgery.

For some, the idea of surgery and anaesthesia can be scary (around 30% of patients are more afraid of the anaesthetic than of the actual operation), while others worry about pain, bruising, and the inconvenience of recovery.

Patients with an anxiety disorder may be more prone to surgical anxiety and fear than the average patient. The reasons for surgical anxiety vary from fear of the unknown to having a bad experience with previous surgeries. Concerns about the outcome of surgery can also cause surgical anxiety.

Ensure that fears and anxiety don't become too overwhelming.

Severe anxiety can cause unpleasant symptoms and stress. Typical symptoms include a pounding heart, a racing heart (fast pulse), irregular heartbeat, nausea, a nervous stomach, shortness of breath and sleep problems.

Anxiety can make it harder for you to understand and remember important things you are told about the operation, such as advice about preparing for it or recovering afterwards.

Here are tips for coping with your upcoming surgery

Emotional and practical support from friends and family: secretive patients are more stressed before and after surgery.

Arm yourself with information: an important step in dealing with surgical anxiety is to become well-informed regarding your surgical treatment. A complete understanding of the procedure, why you need it, and how it's performed can relieve a great deal of worry. If you have had a bad experience with surgery or a loved one who has, speaking to us may provide reassurance that this is a different surgery and a different situation.

Distract yourself: by reading, listening to music, or using exercise or relaxation techniques.

General anaesthesia is safe, and most patients have no serious issues following anaesthesia.

Step away from stress: stress can hurt your recovery after surgery. Limit demands placed on your time, especially if they're likely to increase stress. Adjust your phone alerts so you only get the necessary ones. Inform your friends, family, and co-workers in advance of your admission that you're taking 10-14 days off to rest and relax.

Warnings

Many people who **smoke** tend to smoke even more when feeling anxious. Even if that calms their nerves in the short term, smoking significantly increases the risk of complications after surgery.

Herbal supplements, including teas, powders, and other all-natural plant extracts, should not be used without consulting your surgeon. Many herbs, despite the label “all-natural”, interact badly with anaesthesia and other medications. Some can cause blood thinning, heart arrhythmias, and other reactions that are not desirable during surgery.

If you have been prescribed **propranolol** for anxiety, your doctor may advise you to **stop** taking it before surgery. This is because propranolol can lower your blood pressure too much when combined with some anaesthetics.

A few things to note in advance

Once you're ready to be discharged, you must arrange a taxi or have a friend or family member take you home because **you won't be able to drive**. If you have had a general anaesthetic, you will need a responsible adult to be with you for the first night.

You may not start workouts at **the gym** for 6 weeks, although you may start gentle exercise at around 4 weeks.

On admission, all women of childbearing age will be asked **to provide a urine sample** to exclude pregnancy.

When can I fly after surgery?

Check with your airline and insurance company before flying. It'll depend on your airline's regulations and the flight duration. If in doubt, please ask your surgeon.

Risk of DVT

If you're flying after recent surgery, especially when your mobility has been restricted, you're at an increased risk of [deep vein thrombosis \(DVT\)](#), a blood clot in one of the deep veins in your body, usually in your legs.

Guidance

For medium-haul (3-6 hours) and long-haul (6-12 hours) and as a guide, allow 10 days after facial surgery and 3 weeks after body contouring surgery (such as tummy tucks, breast reduction, major liposuction). You can take steps to reduce your risk of DVT, such as drinking plenty of water, using your Ted stockings, and moving around on the plane. The risk of developing a travel-related DVT is low, even if you're classed as moderate to high risk.

Travel Insurance

Check your travel insurance policy carefully, as you may need to inform the insurance company that you have recently had surgery.

Further advice

If you are uncertain about anything or require further advice, please contact us at hello@waterfronthospital.co.uk