

Practical preparation for your operation

We know that coming into hospital for surgery can be a worrying time. Talk to your family and friends about going into hospital and tell them how they can help you. Don't underestimate how tired you may be afterwards.

Give the checklist below some thought well in advance of the operation.

- **How will I pass the time?** Have some headphones and music, books, tablet computer or puzzles. Don't forget chargers.
- **What can I do to relax?** Learn some breathing techniques, try yoga or listen to relaxing music. Read about mindfulness.
- **What do I need to prepare at home?** You may find it difficult to move around when you return from hospital – consider sleeping on the ground floor and getting mobility aids.
- **Who can look after my elderly relatives?** If friends and family cannot help, [contact your local council and your local carer service](#).
- **How will I get to and from the hospital?** Can someone drive you? If you are eligible for hospital transport, the hospital may be able to organise transport for you.
- **Do I have enough easy-to-cook meals and healthy snacks for when I get home?** Think who might be able to help prepare meals or help with your shopping afterwards.
- **Who can look after my children or pets?** Don't underestimate how tired you might feel after the operation. Ask friends and family to help or to be on standby. To help you with childcare, they may need to arrange time off work too. If you have significant difficulties looking after your children following an operation, talk to your local council or your health visitor.
- **Do I have enough medication and batteries for my hearing aid to last me in hospital and when I get home?** Remember to take your usual medication into hospital with you.
- **Do I have some over-the-counter painkillers at home?** You may need to take some during your recovery as instructed by the hospital.
- **What do I need to pack?** If you are staying in hospital overnight you should think about toiletries, nightwear and comfortable clothes and footwear. It is important to get out of bed, get dressed and start to move as soon as your operation allows – those who do this get home sooner and recover quicker. Temperatures in hospital can vary so some layers of clothing can be useful. [See NHS Choices for further information](#).
- **What else would be helpful to do?** Get your house and garden in order. Get up to date with your general affairs and finances. This will mean you do not have to worry about these whilst you recover.

- **Whom should I let know I am going into hospital?** Friends and family can usually give you practical support. It is also good to have people to talk with whilst you are at home recovering. Many people will want to help your recovery, so let them know how they can help in plenty of time.
- **Make sure I have a shower/bath before going to hospital to minimise the risk of infection.**