

Going home after a local anaesthetic

Poole Hospital Patient information

This leaflet explains what to expect after having a surgical procedure with a **local anaesthetic** (a medicine that numbs part of your body).

After your procedure

You should go home and **rest** after your treatment. You should arrange for someone to **drive you home** on the day of your procedure.

You may feel sore or tired for a day or two. Please take it easy and rest when needed. Follow the instructions given by your nurse.

Wait **at least 24 hours** before you:

- drive a car
- drink alcohol or take recreational drugs
- use machinery or sharp tools
- make important decisions
- lift or carry heavy items, including young children

Only return to your usual activities when you feel well enough.

What might it feel like?

The area where you had your procedure may feel swollen or tight.

Local anaesthetic stops pain by blocking nerve signals. As it wears off, you might feel: tingling, burning, or sensitivity. This is normal.

The numbness usually lasts **4 to 6 hours**. Be careful not to injure the area while it's still numb. You may not feel pain even if there's damage.

Some local anaesthetics also contain **adrenaline**. This makes the blood vessels smaller. This might make your skin look pale or lighter. The normal colour will return as the anaesthetic wears off.

Bleeding and wound care

Most wounds are covered with a **dressing** to keep the area clean and prevent infection. Keep the wound **dry for 24 to 48 hours**, unless told otherwise by your nurse.

You might notice a small amount of blood under the dressing. This is usually nothing to worry about. Some types of wounds are more likely to bleed. Your nurse will explain what's normal for your situation.

If you're worried about bleeding:

- press gently but firmly on the area with a clean cloth for **10–15 minutes**
- call the hospital if it continues or gets worse

Some bruising is also normal. This is more likely if you take blood-thinning medication.

You'll be given a **wound care sheet** with more advice. This will include what to do about any stitches.

Pain management

Once the anaesthetic wears off, it's normal to feel some pain or discomfort. You will be given advice on what painkillers to take and when.

Contact your GP or the hospital if the pain becomes too strong or doesn't improve.

Driving advice

Arrange for someone to **drive you home** on the day of your procedure.

It is **illegal to drive** if you are still affected by anaesthetic or pain medication. Your car insurance may not cover you.

Only start driving again when you feel fully alert and able to drive safely. For example, you must be able to do an emergency stop without pain or delay.

Flying after surgery

Speak to your surgeon if you're planning to **fly** soon after surgery.

You may need to wait a few weeks because flying too soon can increase your risk of developing blood clots.

Returning to work

You can return to work when you feel ready, depending on:

- the type of job you do
- how well you recover
- whether your wound needs extra care

Your nurse will talk with you about this before you leave and can give you a **fit note** if needed.

Letter for your GP

You've been given a copy of your **discharge summary**. A copy has also been sent to your GP electronically.

If you need to see a doctor, show them your summary.

Contacting us after you go home

You can call **Day Surgery Unit** for advice within 24 hours of leaving hospital:



0300 019 2150

(Phones answered 7am - 8pm, Monday to Friday)



At night:

Please tick relevant specialty

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General surgery - Surgical assessment unit (SAU) nurse in charge: **07884 816101**

or **0300 019 3362/3492** Monday - Friday 7.30pm - 7am and Saturday - Sunday 24 hour.

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Head and neck - Surgical assessment unit (SAU) nurse in charge: **07884 786989**

Monday - Friday 7.30pm - 7am and Saturday - Sunday 24 hours.

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Orthopaedics/trauma - TOACU: **0300 019 3660** Monday - Saturday 8am - 8pm outside

hours please contact main switch **01202 665511** who will connect you to the trauma board holder

Please be aware that SAU/C4E/orthopaedics can get very busy at night so there may be a delay in answering the phone.

If it's urgent, call **111** or, in an emergency, call **999**.

Your follow-up appointment

Your follow-up plan may include one of the following:

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A clinic visit at **Poole Hospital** in approximately weeks.

You'll get a letter with the details.

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A telephone call with a nurse or surgeon in weeks to check on your progress.

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An appointment with your **GP practice nurse** for a wound check or to remove stitches on:

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No follow-up is needed.

Preventing blood clots

After surgery there is a small risk of getting a **blood clot** in your leg. This is called a **deep vein thrombosis (DVT)**. Symptoms can include:

- pain or swelling in the leg
- warm or red skin
- bulging or visible veins

If a clot moves to your lungs (called a **pulmonary embolism**), it may cause:

- chest pain
- shortness of breath
- coughing up blood

Seek **urgent medical help** if you have any of these symptoms.

To lower your risk:

- **stay hydrated** - drink plenty of water
- **keep moving** - walk regularly, even if just around the house
- **take deep breaths** - especially if resting in bed

Need Help or Advice?



NHS 111 - For non-emergency medical advice



999 - For emergencies



Your GP - For follow-up care or on-going concerns 24 hours after your discharge

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and use the language and accessibility function available along the top of the site.

To ask for this leaflet in larger print, please contact the patient experience team on **0300 019 8499**
or email uhd.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

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Author: **Toni Bailey** Date: **October 2025** Version: **One** Review date: **October 2028** Ref: **082/25**