

A decorative banner with a blue background and a green wavy border at the bottom. The text 'Post Nephrectomy' is written in white, bold, sans-serif font.

# Post Nephrectomy

## Introduction

This leaflet has been designed to help you to recover following a nephrectomy (kidney removal).

## Wound Care

Your wound (also called your incision sites) will be covered with film dressings.

Your nurse will change these before you go home and advise you on how long to leave them on.

This will normally be for a further 3 days.

Once you have taken off the film dressings you may see paper stitches (steri-strips). Leave them on and they will fall off over time. Do not pull them off as it may cause pain, bruising and swelling is quite normal.

### **The following symptoms could be a sign of an infection:**

- You have a high temperature (above 100.5 °F/ 38°C)
- Your incision sites are hot to touch, red, bleeding, or have a yellow/ green discharge
- Increased pain despite taking pain killers.

If you notice any of these, you will need to make an appointment with your GP. If it is out of hours ring the NHS 111 service.

If you feel really unwell attend your nearest A&E department.

## Diet

A well balanced diet is encouraged to promote wound healing and good bowel function.

You may prefer to eat little and often rather than large meals, just see how you feel.

Drinking plenty of water is also encouraged to prevent constipation. Aim to drink 6-8 glasses a day.

## Constipation

If you become constipated, increase the roughage in your diet. This is in foods like cereals, wholewheat bread, pulses, dried fruit and vegetables. Drink prune juice or orange juice, continue to take your laxatives and if needed see your local pharmacist about other laxatives.

Have a look at the NHS Choices website for more information about including roughage in your diet: <http://bit.ly/NHSChoicesfibre>

## Bathing

You can have quick showers or a strip wash with the film dressings in place.

Once the dressings are removed you can continue to shower and gently wash the incision sites with water, rinse well, and pat dry.

Do not take a bath until the incision sites are completely healed.

## Pain relief

You should be given a leaflet titled 'Plan for reducing postoperative pain medicine'.

The leaflet details groups of medication and which ones to reduce first.

Please note NSAIDS (Ibuprofen, Naproxen and Diclofenac) are not recommended after a nephrectomy and should not be taken.

## Activity

**You should be able to do most of your regular activities within 4 to 6 weeks. Before then:**

- Avoid heavy lifting. Anything above 10lbs (4.5kg) is too heavy.
- Avoid Bending. If you do need to pick something up bend with your knees and not your waist.
- Avoid all strenuous activity, including heavy exercises, weightlifting, swimming and other activities that make you breathe hard or strain.

**DO NOT** push yourself too hard. Slowly increase the amount of time and the intensity of your exercise.

You can do some light house work and walking is encouraged.

Walking will help you build strength. Gradually increase the amount of walking you do each day. Take planned rest periods during the day.

The best gauge is your own body and how you feel. It is very important that you continue walking when you are discharged from the hospital. Not only will this build strength but will also help to prevent blood clots in the legs.

## Driving

Always check with your insurance company first.

Do not drive for 4 weeks after your operation, or until you can do an emergency stop without any pain or discomfort.

## Any questions or concerns?

**If it is within 24 hours of discharge**

**Phone Ansty Ward on:-**

**01444 441881 Extension: 8240**

**If its 24 hours after discharge:**

**Phone your GP or the NHS 111 Service.**