



BON SECOURS HEALTH SYSTEM

# My Surgery



# Introduction

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Welcome to the Bon Secours Hospital Cork, Ireland's largest private hospital (also one of the largest private hospitals in Europe). Our hospital was established in 1915 and has more than 300 beds. We employ more than 1,000 staff and admit approximately 35,000 patients every year.

It is a general hospital providing an extensive range of medical and surgical specialties for adults and children.

We pride ourselves in our ethos that you the patient are at the very centre of all we do.

This ethos originated from our founders, "The Sisters of Bon Secours", whose purpose was "providing care to all who suffer and give them a reason to live and a reason to hope".

It is very important to us that your hospital experience is as smooth as possible. We have therefore provided this information leaflet to help you and your families prepare for your hospital stay and your discharge home.



# Preparing for my surgery

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# Achieving the best results from your surgery

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To help you to be as prepared as possible for your procedure, please find the areas to focus on below.

## **Preparing your body**

- Stop smoking
- Keep your weight under control
- Maintain a healthy diet and exercise regularly
- Inform your healthcare team if your health has changed since your last hospital visit

*For more information see page 6*

## **Preparing your mind**

- Review the educational materials provided
- Make sure the person who is caring for you after your surgery is available for the recovery process
- Your carer should also review these materials to help them look after you on your return home

*For more information see page 8*

if you have any questions regarding your surgery please ask us, we are here to help you.



### **Preparing your home/discharge**

- Follow your healthcare team's recommendations
- If you are discharged home on the day of surgery, ensure your carer is able to stay with you post recovery (at least 24 hours, or longer if required)
- Acquire items that can make your period of recovery more comfortable
- Prepare in advance for everyday activities such as meals and shopping
- If you require convalescence post surgery, ensure this is arranged prior to your admission for surgery

*For more information see page 9*

### **Preparing for your hospital stay**

- Make a list of what to take to hospital with you
- Make a note of when to stop eating and drinking before your surgery
- Keep to hand your admission details so that you know when and where to arrive (We advise no sooner than 15 mins before your admission time)

*For more information see page 15*

# Preparing your body

## LIFESTYLE CHANGES

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### Stop smoking

- Smokers who undergo surgery experience up to a 50% increase in wound infections and lung complications
- Smoking slows down the healing process

*For help to quit smoking, visit the HSE website: [www.quit.ie](http://www.quit.ie)*

### Manage a healthy weight

- It is beneficial to maintain a healthy diet as it can lead to better outcomes.

*For more information visit [www.healthyireland.ie](http://www.healthyireland.ie)*

### Manage existing medical conditions

- It is important that existing medical conditions are well controlled. If you become unwell before your surgery please discuss with your GP or surgeon.



## OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE SURGERY

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### Infections

- It is important that you have no active infections before surgery. These include tooth abscesses, bladder infections, infected leg ulcers, insect bites or stings, colds and flu
- If you become unwell before your surgery, please discuss with your GP or surgeon

### Teeth and gums

- It is important to take good care of your teeth
- If you are planning any dental treatment please let your surgeon know

### Cosmetics

- Remove any cosmetics and false tan
- Remove any nail polish and false nails
- Remove any piercings as there is a risk of burns

### Medication

- Your surgeon will inform you if you need to stop taking

your medications that thin your blood (such as aspirin and warfarin). If you need to take something else your surgeon will explain this.

- Your surgeon will explain how to adjust any medications for diabetes during the time that you cannot eat before surgery.
- Unless otherwise advised, you should continue taking all medications.
- It is important that you bring with you to the hospital a list of the medications you are taking (remember medications include: tables; injections; liquids; patches; creams and inhalers that you take as part of your treatment plan).

### Skin

- It is important that your skin is clean, does not have any open sores or wounds and is free from infection before your operation
- Please ensure you shower the night before or morning of surgery.

# Preparing your mind

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## How your close friends and family can help you

The person taking care of you after surgery can play an important role in your preparation, recovery and rehabilitation. We advise that you ask a family member or friend to support you through this process. Your carer will help with your 24 hour care and daily activities, and may also help to provide advice, encouragement and emotional support.

## Learn about your surgery

If you have any questions or concerns not covered here, contact your surgeon. You should write down any questions you have so you don't forget them.





# Preparing your home

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## Create a safe home environment for your recovery

- Have someone help you arrange your home environment
- Have firm, comfortable seating readily available that is higher than knee level for ease of access. Chairs with arm supports and high backs help
- Remove rugs and mats
- Remove clutter or furniture that may cause an obstruction when using a walking aid
- Unplug and remove electrical cords from walkways
- You might want to consider moving things to a more accessible place for a short period after your operation

## Here are a few suggestions that can help you prepare for everyday life after surgery:

- Arrange for someone to help you with your meals and do light housekeeping until you are feeling stronger
- Ask someone to be available to assist you in washing and dressing as needed
- Stock up on groceries and toiletries and arrange for someone to help you restock if required
- Prepare or purchase frozen meals in advance
- Arrange sick leave in advance and update your employer on your return to work plan
- Organise any prescription medicines in advance

If you are unsure about any of this advice, please talk to your healthcare team

# Medication form

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Please complete the Medication form attached to this booklet and bring this with you on the morning of your surgery.

- We also need to know any medications you were taking in the past four weeks even if you are no longer taking them.
- Can you list any allergies that you may have?
- Can you give us the name and contact details of your community pharmacy and family doctor?

**Don't forget to include**

- inhalers/nebules
- eye/ear/nasal drops
- creams/ointments and medicated patches
- suppositories/pessaries
- oral contraceptives/hormone replacement therapy
- over-the-counter medicines for e.g. pain or allergies
- vitamins and minerals
- nutritional supplements and herbal products

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20.																				

Admission nurse (signature below indicates all details above have been reviewed)

Admission nurse (signature below indicates all details above have been reviewed)				Medication was reconciled by:				Further check performed by:				
Signature	Date	Time	Signature	IMC	Date	Time	Signature	Date	Time	Signature	Date	Time

List any other medication which you have taken within the last 4 weeks not included in the list above.

Signature of patient/carer or relative: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments – for hospital use only





**BON SECOURS HOSPITAL**  
College Road, Cork

## **Information for Patients attending the Bon Secours Hospital Cork –**

### **What we need to know about your medication**

To help us to know what medication you are currently taking or have recently taken can you complete the list on the other side of this page for us, before you come into hospital? This list will be used during your admission by nursing and medical staff and will form part of your medical record. If you need help completing this your G.P. or your community pharmacy may be able to help or may be able to give you a printout which you can bring with you to hospital. Can you also bring your current medication into hospital with you?

#### **What we need to know?**

- We need a list of the medications you are taking, the strength or dosage and how many you take and how often you take them.
- If you are bringing medications into hospital please ensure they are in original packets/boxes. There is no need to bring in blister packs or dosette boxes.

# Things to remember on the day of your surgery

## **When should I arrive at the hospital?**

Before surgery, your healthcare team may need to perform several examinations to ensure surgery can proceed safely.

You will be asked to arrive on the day of surgery. The hospital will advise the patient of the time of admission to the hospital via SMS text message

after 11am on the day prior to your planned admission.

## **Where should I go when I arrive?**

**Please attend the reception desk at College Road entrance. (Your carer can drop you off just outside the main entrance, and park (see map below).**



# Things to remember on the day of your surgery

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## **When should I fast?**

You can eat a light breakfast (tea & toast) up to six hours before your admission time (unless instructed otherwise by your consultant). You can drink **clear** fluids (non-fizzy **and no milk**) up to two hours before admission time.

Exactly when you should stop eating and drinking will depend on your admission time.

**The consultant and or secretary will advise the patient of the date of surgery.**

**The hospital will advise the patient of the time of admission to the hospital via SMS text message after 11am on the day prior to your planned admission.**

Having food or liquid in your stomach when you are under anaesthetic or sedation can cause serious complications.

## **Should I take my medicines on the day of the surgery?**

**You will have discussed your medications with your surgeon, as detailed in your medication form.**

**They will confirm requirements for surgery.**



# Day of Surgery

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**The anaesthetist will meet you on the day of your surgery and will discuss your anaesthetic and pain management with you.**

**Your nurse will carry out an assessment.**

**You will then be taken to the operating theatre, where your surgery will take place.**

**You will also find more medical information about your surgery and anaesthetics later on in this booklet.**

## **After surgery**

- The nurse will monitor your vital signs (such as blood pressure, pulse and temperature)
- Drinking some fluids (you will be encouraged to drink as soon as you are able)
- You will be given pain relief

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## **Once stabilised after surgery:**

- Continued monitoring of vital signs
- Assessment of your wound
- Drinking of fluids as early as possible
- Anti-coagulation medication (oral or injection) to prevent blood clots
- Continued pain relief
- Your nurse will mobilise you out of bed and will continue to monitor you.

# Anaesthetics

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## Spinal anaesthetic

A spinal anaesthetic (or spinal) involves injecting local anaesthetic and other painkillers into an area in the middle of your lower back so that it can reach your spinal cord. This numbs your nerves to give pain relief below the waist.

A spinal can be given with or without sedation.

## General anaesthetic

During a general anaesthetic, medication is administered via a needle into one of your veins; this gently sends you off to sleep after which you will feel nothing.

## Sedation

Sedation is the use of a small amount of medication to produce a 'sleepy' like state. It is given into a vein through a needle in your hand. It makes you physically and mentally relaxed during the procedure. It is not a general anaesthetic.



# Pain management

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It is normal to have some pain following surgery, especially when you begin to stand or walk. Pain medication will help you with this. It is very important that your pain does not restrict you from moving around following surgery.

## **Assessing your pain**

Your nursing team will ask you to score your pain levels on a scale (normally 0-10) to indicate whether you feel no pain, through to an indication of severe pain.

The team will also ask you to specify the location and the type of pain you are feeling and whether it changes over time.

You will be given regular painkillers.

## **Tablets**

**You will be given a prescription for your pain relief post surgery if you require it.**

# Blood clots and deep vein thrombosis

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## What is a blood clot?

This is when a clot forms inside a blood vessel usually your leg, which may break off and go to your lungs. A clot can cause death.

You have a higher chance of getting a clot in hospital than after a long haul flight. A clot can form up to 90 days after being in hospital.

## What can I do to help myself?

- Ask for your risk of developing a blood clot to be assessed if you are admitted to hospital
- Walk and move as much as possible especially after surgery
- Do not spend long periods sitting on chairs or in bed
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Follow advice on wearing of stockings and taking medication

Blood clots can be very serious but there are effective treatments to deal with them and help prevent them. In hospital this may require taking medication, sometimes as an injection under the skin and sometimes wearing stockings. It will always involve moving as much as possible.

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## Signs & symptoms of a blood clot?

There are steps you can take to prevent blood clots:

- Swelling or pain in your leg or calf
- Warmth or redness in the leg or calf
- Fainting
- Shortness of breath or rapid breathing chest pain when you breathe deeply
- Coughing or coughing up blood

If you have one or more of these, you may have a clot and need urgent treatment.

### **You may be at increased risk if:**

- You are in hospital and for the 90 days after discharge
- You are immobile for long periods of time or air travel longer than 6 hours
- You or a close relative had a blood clot in the leg or lung
- You are over 60 years of age or are overweight
- You have heart, lung or inflammatory disease
- After surgery
- You are on cancer treatment
- You have thrombophilia
- You have varicose veins with phlebitis
- You are pregnant and for the 6 weeks after birth
- You are taking oral contraceptive pill or hormone replacement therapy

# Am I ready?

## CHECKLIST

- I have contacted my insurance provider and I am fully aware of my cover for this procedure. (If you have an excess on your policy this must be paid on admission)
- My carer is able to stay with me post discharge (at least 24 hours, or longer if required)
- The person taking me home is:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Their number is:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Any equipment I need to make my period of recovery more comfortable is in place

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

### My Care Team

Bon Secours Cork  
(021) 454 2807

My consultant  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

My GP  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### Date and Time of Surgery

Date of Surgery  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Time of Surgery  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

The consultant and or secretary will advise the patient of the date of surgery.

The hospital will advise the patient of the time of admission to the hospital via SMS text message after 11am on the day prior to your planned admission.

### Health Insurers Customer Service Numbers

VHI	1890 444 444
Laya Health	021 202 2000
Irish life Health	1890 714 444

# What to bring to hospital

## CHECKLIST

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### Essential clothing and personal care

- Comfortable shoes: such as closed-back slippers or trainers – **not** heeled shoes or flip-flops
- Loose-fitting nightwear and a dressing gown
- Loose fitting clothes to wear in hospital
- Loose-fitting clothes for travel to and from the hospital

### Medicines and medical aids

- Any walking aids you currently use
- All medicines you currently take including prescription, over the counter and herbal medicines, inhalers, sprays, patches, injections, drops, creams etc.
- Any glasses, hearing aids, contact lenses and dentures you currently use
- Please complete the Medication form in the middle of this booklet and bring this booklet with you

### Other

- House keys
- Mobile phone and charger (please charge up before bringing to hospital and label the charger with your name on it)
- Reading material
- Contact list (if not on your phone)

### What not to bring?

- Valuables, including jewellery and money. The hospital cannot take the responsibility for any valuables that go missing
- Large suitcases and bags, the storage space for these and for belongings is limited

