

## How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the entrance to every ward before coming in to or after leaving the ward. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

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[www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk](http://www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk)

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Issue date: June 2019  
Review date: June 2021

Leaflet code: SGY-002  
Version: 3.0

# How to get fit for surgery

## Patient information leaflet

If you require a translation or an alternative format of this leaflet please call the Patient Advice & Liaison Service on 01296 316402

Safe & compassionate care,

every time

## What can I do to be in the best condition before surgery?

Undergoing surgery is like taking part in an athletic event, and in some cases is equivalent to running half a marathon. Therefore in order to give yourself the best chance of a good recovery with minimal complications there are a number of things you can do yourself

### • Physical fitness

Increasing the amount of physical activity you do will ensure your body is as fit as possible before the surgery. Although you may find it difficult to exercise due to the problem which requires surgery, do try to find ways of introducing some form of exercise into your daily routine. Even 15 minutes of walking is far better than not exercising at all.

### • Losing weight

Increased size makes both the anaesthetic and surgery more difficult with an increased risk of having heart or breathing problems during or after the operation. There is also a greater chance of bleeding, longer hospital stay, wound infection and developing blood clots in the leg. It is therefore important to try to lose weight before your operation to reduce these risks. See your GP if you would like further help in losing weight.

### • Nutrition

A diet rich in fruit and vegetable as well as protein (which can be found in meat, fish and legumes, such as pulses, peas, beans, lentils) not only aids wound healing but gives you the necessary energy to recover from your surgery, reducing your length of hospital stay and getting you back on your feet as soon as possible. If you are underweight see your GP for further advice.

### •Smoking

Stopping smoking 4 weeks before your operation not only helps your wounds to heal but also lowers your risk of breathing and heart problems around the time of your operation. Even stopping smoking up to 3 days before surgery allows more oxygen to be transported in the blood stream. Speak to your GP or local NHS stop smoking organisation if you would like help in quitting.

### • Cutting down on alcohol

If you drink more than the recommended daily average (2 units for women and 3 units for men) you are at increased risk of complications around the time of your operation. These include alcohol withdrawal, dehydration, infection, heart problems or bleeding. If you need help in reducing your alcohol intake contact your GP.

### • Long term medical conditions

If you suffer from high blood pressure, diabetes, breathing problems (e.g. asthma, emphysema) or heart problems (e.g. atrial fibrillation, angina, pacemaker), thyroid disease or anaemia arrange to see your GP or Specialist Nurse. They will determine if your disease is under control and if not further investigations may need to be arranged in order to improve your condition.