

Look out for any signs of infection such as: Pain or discomfort on passing urine, needing to go to the toilet more often than usual or any change in the appearance or smell of the urine. If you do notice any of these signs then contact your GP immediately.

Constipation

The difference in diet, the change in level of activity and the prescription of medication can lead to irregular bowel habits. This is perfectly normal and the problem should correct itself in time. However, if you are suffering with constipation, you can help yourself by eating a high fibre diet with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables and drink plenty of fluids. You may need to use a mild laxative. Please ask your nurse for this.

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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How to recognise and prevent complications after your surgery

Patient information leaflet

If you require a translation or an alternative format of this leaflet please call PALS (Patient Advice & Liaison Service) on 01296 316042

Safe & compassionate care,

every time

Wound Infections

As part of the normal healing process, many people experience the normal signs of healing which are:

Tingling, itching or numbness around the wound. A small, hard lumpy feeling or scabs, which form to protect the healing site.

The following are signs of infection in the wound and you should consult your doctor if these occur:

- Significant increased swelling.
- Redness at incision site
- Change in colour, amount or odour of drainage
- Marked increase in pain, not controlled by regular pain killers
- Fever greater than 38°C

What you can do to prevent wound infection

- Keep your incision clean and dry
- Keep your incision covered with a light dressing for the number of days as instructed by your surgeon (Buckinghamshire Healthcare trust will send you home with extra dressings if required)
- You may shower every day. After showering, apply new dressing if necessary.
- If visiting a dentist, please inform them of any recent surgery.

Blood Clots

Surgery may cause the blood to slow and coagulate in the veins in your legs, creating a blood clot. A blood clot in your leg vein can break away and travel to the lungs. This is called a pulmonary embolus.

Signs of blood clots

Pain, tenderness, swelling and heat in the calf muscle

Sudden onset chest pain, difficulty and/or rapid breathing and /or shortness of breath may be a sign of a pulmonary embolus. **This is an emergency and you should call 999 if this is suspected.**

Prevention of Blood Clots

- Use Foot and Ankle pumps
- Early mobilisation and gentle walking
- Compression stockings
- Blood thinning injections or tablets
- Maintaining a good fluid intake

Chest Infections

If you should think you may be suffering from a chest infection it is important to see your GP for assessment. With treatment you are likely to make a full recovery, however some infections are more serious than others, and if you are already in poor health you are more likely to become seriously unwell.

Recognition of chest infections

Feeling unwell, temperature, sweating and shortness of breath.

Coughing up yellow, green or blood stained sputum /mucus
Any new or worsening wheeze, chest tightness, or sharp chest pain.

Prevention of chest infections

It is very important to get out of bed and walk around as soon as possible. In most cases, this is within a few hours of surgery. It is vital you breathe deeply to reduce the risk of chest complications and cough actively to help remove any sputum in your lungs.

Urine Infections

You may develop a urine (water) infection after surgery, particularly if you have had a catheter. To avoid this ensure that you drink plenty of fluids.