

Further Information

1. Routine preoperative tests for elective surgery.
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng45/chapter/Recommendations>
2. RCPCH: Pre-procedure Pregnancy Checking for Under-16s. <http://www.rcpch.ac.uk/pregnancychecks>
3. Checking Pregnancy Before Surgery: Patient Safety.
<http://www.nrls.npsa.nhs.uk/resources/?EntryId45=73838>

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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Pre-procedure pregnancy testing

Information for women of childbearing age

If you require a translation or an alternative format of this leaflet please call the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01296 316042

Safe & compassionate care,

every time

Introduction

This leaflet has been produced to provide information for you prior to your procedure but it is not intended to replace discussion between you and the medical/nursing team looking after you. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to discuss them with the healthcare team.

Pre-procedure pregnancy testing – why is it important?

Risks to you:

Whilst undergoing a general anaesthetic is normally very safe, there is evidence which suggests that operating on women with an unrecognised pregnancy increases the anaesthetic risks to the patient.

Risks to the foetus:

During pregnancy the foetus is very vulnerable to the effects of some anaesthetic medicines, X-rays and surgeries. This is particularly the case at the very beginning of a pregnancy, when it is possible you may not realise you are pregnant. Operations during pregnancy can increase the risk of complications with the pregnancy, including premature labour and miscarriage.

Who requires a pre-procedure pregnancy test?

Pregnancy testing before surgery is recommended for all female patients aged 12-55 years of age inclusively. Testing is entirely unrelated to any individual's personal circumstances or lifestyle.

What is needed?

Pregnancy testing is performed using a sample of urine provided on the day of surgery. The test takes only a matter of minutes to provide a result, and will not delay the planned surgery. We will, of course, inform you of the result.

I think I may be pregnant; what should I do?

It is very important that you let one of the nurses or doctors know before your operation. This information will be treated in confidence. You will be offered a urinary pregnancy test, and if this is positive, a confirmatory blood test may be sent to the laboratory. Whilst very reliable, in very early pregnancy, there is a small possibility you may still be pregnant even with a negative urine pregnancy test. In this situation, a doctor will talk with you about the risks and benefits of proceeding with the planned operation.

I am sure I am not pregnant; do I still require the test?

It is important to know that we would never test without your consent. However, we request pregnancy testing on everyone, because this way we are confident that we are keeping you as safe as possible whilst in hospital.

If you are unhappy to provide a sample for pregnancy testing, it might be necessary to delay routine surgery, though would not affect urgent or emergency surgery. If surgery proceeds, we would request you to sign a declaration to say that you have made the decision to not have pregnancy testing.