

Bariatric Surgery - FAQs

What will happen while I'm in hospital and when will I go home?

Hospital stay is routinely 2-3 days but can be longer if any post-operative complications arise, as these will be dealt with before you will go home. Before going home, you will be able to mobilise with comfort (at times this requires a small amount of pain medication) and be hydrating well on a fluid diet.

When can I drive after surgery?

You should not drive until you have been cleared by the surgeon at your first post- surgery appointment 10-14 days after surgery.

Your diabetes medications are likely to change after surgery. If you are experiencing low blood glucose levels do not drive and contact your team.

When can I exercise?

It is important you get out of bed and mobilise the first day after surgery, aiming for a minimum of five short walks if able. Nursing staff will assist you at first. Gradually build up how far you walk, always listening to your body. Refer to the recommendations provided by the physiotherapist.

As you recover during the first 6 weeks, only complete body weight resisted exercise. For best recovery, it is recommended that from 6 weeks after surgery, you complete a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate aerobic physical activity. This is equivalent to 30 minutes of exercise five days a week. Your long term goal should be to complete 300 minutes, including 2 to 3 sessions of strength training each week. This is equivalent to approximately 45 minutes of exercise 7 days a week or 60 minutes 5 days a week.

To reduce the risk of infection, do not include pool based exercise for at least 6 weeks after surgery. It is also advised to consult your doctor regarding this to ensure your wounds have healed.

What do I do if I feel pain?

During your hospital admission, some discomfort after surgery is normal. It is important for your recovery that your pain is managed appropriately so that you are able to take deep breaths, get out of bed and mobilise. If your pain exceeds 'moderate' or more than 4/10 intensity, discuss this with the nursing staff and doctors to see if any further pain medication is available to you.

Once discharged home, if you are experiencing new pain or a change in your pain that is not improving, present to your local emergency department.

When should I present to the emergency department?

If you are not able to maintain your nutrition or hydration, or you have a change in your level of pain or discomfort you can contact the Bariatric Surgery Care Co-ordinator on 36470492 during business hours. Out of business hours or if unable to contact the co- ordinator you should present to your local emergency department. It is recommended you let the local emergency department know where you had your recent surgery and who your surgeon was so that they can contact them.

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When can I go back to work?

Generally speaking you can go back to work after 10-14 days; however this can vary, especially with manual jobs. Your team will discuss this with you individually.

What will happen with my medication after surgery?

There are likely to be changes to your diabetes medications. Your team will advise you of any changes before you leave hospital and will liaise with you after you have left hospital as further changes are often made. It is important to monitor your blood glucose levels regularly at home. Please contact your team if you are having difficulty managing your blood glucose levels, especially if you are having low blood glucose levels (hypos).

Will I need CPAP ongoing after surgery if I have obstructive sleep apnoea?

If you use CPAP for OSA before surgery, your need and or prescription for this after surgery may change. It is recommended that you see your GP around 6 months post-operatively or earlier if needed, to organise a referral for a sleep study.

What happens with my loose skin?

There is currently no publicly funded post bariatric surgery plastic surgery service.

What if I'm feeling low in mood or like I'm struggling to cope with the change in my lifestyle after surgery?

Before surgery it is very likely that you will be looking forward with a positive attitude. Thoughts about future weight reduction, health benefits, and improved quality of life are likely to be on your mind. After surgery however, some people find that the experience of surgery and all the lifestyle changes required can have an emotional impact. Although it is normal to experience feeling stressed, low, or anxious at times, it is important that if it is prolonged, or you find yourself experiencing hopelessness, agitation, or loss of interest in activities, that you seek out professional advice. If this happens to you, it is very important that you contact the Bariatric Surgery Care Co-ordinator who will be able to link you in with the appropriate care and support.