

# Your surgical pre-op assessment:

making sure you are okay to have  
an anaesthetic for your operation

Pre-op assessment

Patient information

## What is this information about?

### This information is about:

- The surgical pre-assessment appointment that you will have before your operation.
- Other ways in which you can help to make sure you are fit enough to have your operation and recover as well as possible.

## Why have I been given this information?

You have been given this information because you will be having a pre-assessment appointment before your operation. Reading this information will help you to get ready for your appointment and to know what to expect from it.

Following the advice in this information can make it more likely that your operation and recovery will go as well as possible.

## Where will my appointment be?

Your appointment will be in the Surgical Pre-assessment Clinic at either St. Richard's, Southlands or Worthing Hospital. We will tell you where your appointment will be when it is made for you.

## What is a pre-assessment appointment?

At your pre-assessment appointment you will have a thorough health check (assessment), done by a nurse.

It is important for you to have this check because it may not be safe for you to have an anaesthetic (medicine to make sure you're asleep and comfortable during the entire operation) or you may need further investigations before we proceed with your operation.

Once we have checked how you are, we will do everything that we can to make sure that you are as fit as possible so that:

- You can have your operation.
- Your operation will be safe for you.
- You will recover as well as possible afterwards.

## What should I bring with me to my appointment?

**Please bring:**

- An up-to-date list of any medicines you are taking. This should include medicines that are prescribed for you and any that you have bought over the counter (from a pharmacy, shop or online without a prescription). Please include details of:
  - The reason you are taking the medicine.
  - The dose you are taking.
  - How often you take it.

If you are unsure about any of these details for your prescription medicines **do** contact your GP surgery to ask or check on your online health record.

- A list of any health conditions that you have now or have had in the past (your medical history). If you have any letters from specialist hospital clinics that contain information about conditions or treatments you have had please bring these too.
- A record of your blood pressure (your Blood Pressure Diary). You only need to bring this if you are taking medicines to control your blood pressure, or you have been found to have high blood pressure when you have visited the hospital.

## What will happen during my appointment?

Your appointment will take around 45 minutes.

You will see a health care assistant and a nurse.

### They will:

- Measure your weight, height and blood pressure.  
They may also:
  - Check your heart rhythm using an ECG machine.
  - Take a sample of your blood.
  - Take a swab to check whether you are carrying a germ called MRSA which could be harmful to you and to other patients.
- Ask you about how you are and what medical conditions you have now or have had in the past. This will include asking you about any allergies that you have and how you have reacted to having anaesthetic medicines in the past.
- Ask you about your social history. This might include, for example, asking about any work that you do, how well you are able to do the things that you need to without help, where you live and who may be able to care for you at home after your operation.
- Finding out about your fitness and how easy you find it to move around and do exercise.
- Tell you what you must do before your operation. This includes telling you:
  - What you should eat and drink in the hours before your operation and when you must stop eating and drinking (giving you fasting instructions).
  - Which of your medicines you must stop taking and when.
  - What you should do, or what we may need to do, about any health conditions you have that need to be checked further or managed.

# What must I do while I am waiting for my pre assessment appointment or the date of my operation (or both)?

## 1. Have your existing medical conditions checked by your GP.

It is important to make sure that any medical conditions that you have are as well controlled as possible to avoid your operation being delayed or even cancelled.

Your targets for managing conditions so that it is safe for you to have your operation are:

- **Diabetes:** target HBA1C (blood sugar or blood glucose) less than 8.5%.
- **Hypertension:** target blood pressure less than 160/95.
- **Anaemia:** target iron tablet dose, 1 tablet every other day. This will help you to absorb (take in) iron into your blood.

**Do** contact your GP as soon as possible if you have any of these conditions and think they may not be well controlled and do not meet the targets above.

## 2. Make changes to your lifestyle if you need to.

You can help yourself to get ready for your operation by making changes to your lifestyle. Doing these things can help to make it safer for you to have an anaesthetic as well as helping you to recover as much and as quickly as possible:

- Be active and do as much exercise as you can.
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet.
- Find ways to relax and to deal with stress or anxiety you may be feeling about your operation (be mentally ready).
- Stop smoking.
- Reduce how much alcohol you drink.

## Where can I find further information to help me prepare for my operation?

The Royal College of Anaesthetists webpages about preparing for your operation. They include:

- **Preparing for surgery – fitter better sooner** leaflet (Royal College of Anaesthetists) <https://rcoa.ac.uk/patients/patient-information-resources/preparing-for-surgery>
- **Managing anxiety before surgery** web page. <https://rcoa.ac.uk/patients/patient-information-resources/preparing-your-mind-surgery>
- **British Dietetic Association diet and nutrition** information. <https://www.bda.uk.com/food-health.html>
- **Local wellbeing services** (hubs) to help you manage your weight, drink less alcohol or stop smoking. <https://www.westsussexwellbeing.org.uk/>

## What happens after my pre assessment?

Depending on what we find out at your pre-assessment about how fit and well you are we will either:

- Decide that you are well enough to have an anaesthetic and your operation. In this case the Admissions team will contact you with a date for your operation.
- Refer you (send you) to have a further review by an Anaesthetist.

We will let you know if there is anything further than the Anaesthetist would like us to do to help you to get ready to have your operation.

## What should I do if I have any concerns about my appointment or operation arrangements?

Do contact the Admissions team if you need:

- To cancel or rebook your appointment or operation.
- To ask for help with communication at your appointments such as someone to translate or a BSL interpreter.

Phone: **01903 205111 Ext. 85061**

### Be aware

The Pre-assessment Clinic team do not book your pre-assessment appointment or the date of your operation.

## What should I contact if I need any further information or support after I have read this information?

Please contact the Admissions team. Be aware, they may direct you to your GP surgery or another healthcare team.

Phone: **01903 205111 Ext. 85061.**

This leaflet is for patients receiving care  
in St. Richard's, Southlands or Worthing  
Hospitals.

Ref. number: 2478  
Publication date: 03/2025  
Review date: 03/2028

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