

MR S T R BAILEY BSc Msc FRCS (Gen Surg)
Consultant General, Colorectal & Laparoscopic Surgeon

**Consulting at: Spire Tunbridge Wells Hospital, Maidstone &
Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust and KIMS Hospital, Maidstone**

PATIENT INFORMATION:
Post Operative Instructions
(Coloproctology)

Spire Tunbridge Wells Hospital
Fordcombe Road
Fordcombe, Tunbridge Wells
Tunbridge Wells
Kent TN3 0RD
Tel: 01622 538204

KIMS
Newnham Court Way
Weaving, Maidstone
Kent ME14 5FT
Tel: 01622 538204

The following information acts as a guideline for aftercare recommendations that apply to you following your surgery. These precautions will help prevent complications and problems following your surgery. They are basic suggestions to help aid your recovery and minimise post operative discomfort.

1. Following General Anaesthetic

After a general anaesthetic it is important that you avoid driving, operating complex machinery or signing any legal documentation for 24 hours post operatively. It is sensible to have a responsible adult with you overnight following your discharge, so that if problems were to arise, help is close at hand. The affects of your general anaesthetic should have worn off after 24 hours and you can return to normal activities as you feel able to.

2. Managing Pain

You will be discharged with suitable pain medication, appropriate for the type of surgery that you have undergone. You are encouraged to take the prescribed pain medication in order to keep yourself as comfortable as possible during your recovery. It is important to 'get ahead of pain' and prevent having to 'catch up'. This will allow you to go about your day to day activities with the minimal level of discomfort. If you have any concerns about your pain management, please don't hesitate to ask prior to being discharged. It is also most important that you report any new, increasing or unrelieved pain to the hospital or Mr Bailey's team, as further action may need to be taken.

3. Wound Care

Your wound will usually have been closed by stitches that dissolve under the skin, if Mr Bailey has used any other form of suture, you will be informed and an appropriate plan made for those stitches to be removed, usually between 7-10 days. This can be done either at the hospital or via your Practice Nurse at your General Practitioners. On occasion, Mr Bailey will use skin glue which will form a scab over the incision site; this is watertight at 24 hours and means that you can get the wound wet. Before and after touching your wound, you should ensure that your hands are cleaned thoroughly and your dressing may be removed completely at 72 hours and the wound left to the air, unless you are given specific instructions otherwise by Mr Bailey or his team. It is normal to have some numbness around the incision for some time after surgery; this will subside as the incision heals. You should avoid exposing the incision to the sun for at least two months following surgery, as this can cause the incision to become very red and for six months after an operation, it is sensible to cover the wound with Factor 50 sunscreen to reduce this affect.

Should the surgical site develop any of the following signs of infection, which include:

- Redness
- Pain
- Swelling
- Drainage of fluid or pus
- Heat at the incision site
- Or general fever (temperature greater than 39 degrees centigrade)

You should not hesitate to contact the hospital, your General Practitioner, or Mr Bailey's team, who will advise you on the appropriate next steps.

4. Activity

After your surgery and when the anaesthesia has worn off completely, it is important that you get up and return to normal activities as quickly as possible, as dictated by your level of discomfort. It is therefore very important to keep your pain well controlled. This will help reduce potential complications and lead to a faster recovery. In the week following your surgery, we recommend that you walk gently and slowly, increasing the distance on a daily

basis. When sitting in a chair, ensure that you get up every half an hour or so and walk around.

Plan your daily activities so that you can rest often and do not expect your energy levels to be the same as they were prior to the surgery. Your body needs time to heal itself and this may cause you to feel weak or need to take frequent naps. Essentially, do as your body tells you that you are able to.

In general, driving should be avoided for ten days to two weeks after surgery, unless you have been instructed otherwise by Mr Bailey. Before beginning to drive again, ensure that you can sit comfortably and wear the seat belt. You should be able to change gear (if applicable) and use the break properly before driving. Avoid long journeys for two weeks and speak with your insurance firm to make certain you are covered.

It is important that you avoid strenuous physical activity or heavy lifting for a month following your surgery. Lifting objects of greater than 10kg (a small bag of household shopping) should be avoided, at least until you have seen Mr Bailey in the Out Patient Clinic. Returning to the gym and strenuous physical exercise will take at least a month.

5. Diet

Resume your regular and normal diet when you return home, unless you have been instructed otherwise or placed on a special diet. You may not feel like eating regular size portions immediately and it is normal to have less of an appetite after surgery. This will generally return to normal when your activity level increases. In the beginning, try eating small meals more regularly. It is important to choose high protein foods which will help your body heal; these include foods such as chicken, beef, cheese, tofu, milkshakes and ice cream. Drink lots of fluids (2-3 litres of water a day) and include ample fibre in your diet, ensuring at least 5-7 portions of fresh fruit and vegetables, with wholegrain cereal on a daily basis to avoid constipation.

6. Passage of Spongistan Plug

When you first open your bowels, you may notice a small plug is passed. This is nothing to be concerned about and has been placed post operatively to help with clotting and healing. It should be flushed down the toilet. It is also important that if this is not seen, if it has not been passed within 24 hours, it is nothing to be worried about, it is made of a derivative of seaweed and will dissolve.

7. Avoidance of Constipation

It is essential that you avoid constipation and straining at stool following your surgery. If you are sitting on the toilet for more than five minutes, this is too long. You should maintain at least two litres, preferably three litres of water or squash on a daily basis to keep yourself well hydrated. You should take 5-7 portions of fresh fruit and vegetable a day and possibly supplement your diet with bran or wholegrain cereals. If you do feel constipated, you will be sent home with an appropriate laxative, which you should take as directed on the prescription. It is normal for the bowels not to function properly for the first 48-72 hours after surgery, but occasionally, people do become significantly constipated and if you have any concerns, you mustn't hesitate to contact the hospital.

8. Bleeding Per Rectum

A small volume of bleeding is quite normal after rectal or anal surgery and this may persist for 5-7 days following the operation. If sutures have been placed inside, these usually dissolve at the 4-6 week mark and bleeding may be noticed at this point as well. Again, this is nothing to be concerned about. If however the bleeding is large volume, associated with increasing pain or fevers, contains clots or is mixed with the motions, then it is important that advice is sought.

The aforementioned acts as guideline for your post operative care, you may have been given specific instructions. Should you have any questions, queries or concerns, you must not hesitate to contact the hospital, your General Practitioner or Mr Bailey's team, who will answer any queries that you may have.

If you do encounter wound problems, bleeding or any new symptoms you are concerned about, please contact KIMS: 01622 237555 or Spire Tunbridge Wells Hospital: 01892 740047.