

Liver Patient Information Sheet

You have been scheduled for liver surgery. This procedure allows your doctor to remove a portion of your liver or address liver-related conditions using either open surgery or a minimally invasive laparoscopic technique. It is commonly performed to treat liver tumors, cysts, abscesses, or other abnormalities, and may also be part of treatment for liver cancer or to remove damaged tissue caused by injury or disease.

Risks with Liver surgery

- **Bleeding:** Liver is an organ which is full of blood and there is a risk of severe bleeding while cutting the liver. We use special techniques to cut the liver which reduces the risk significantly.
- **Bile leak:** Bile can leak from small bile ducts on the cut surface of the liver. This complication occurs infrequently.
- **Liver failure:** Liver failure may occur if the volume of liver left behind is not enough. This is a serious complication for which supportive therapy is given until the liver function recovers.
This complication has a high risk of death.
- **Wound Infection:** Infection at the area of incision site.
- **Developing a hernia** near one of the incision sites.
- **Pneumonia:** infection in the lungs.
- **Venous Thrombosis:** Blood clot in legs that can travel to the lungs.
- **Death:** less than 3-5%

The day of your operation

- Do not eat or drink for at least 6 hours before the operation.
- Have a shower with mild antibacterial soap.
- Arrive at the hospital at the time you have been asked.

What to bring to the hospital?

- **Home medication:** Bring a list of medications you are taking. Some medications may have to be adjusted. Some medications can affect your recovery and response to anaesthesia.

- You should get loose-fitting comfortable clothes to the hospital.
- You should also bring a pair of comfortable slippers/slip-on-shoes.
- You should leave jewellery and valuables at home.

How long will the operation take?

Liver operations are complicated and major operations. The exact time depends on the type of liver resection. The anaesthetic doctor will take around an hour and a half to prepare you for the operation. After this, the operation, on an average, takes about 6 hours.

After your operation.

You will be in the recovery room where your heart rate, blood pressure, breathing, urine output will be monitored. Once you are stable you will be transferred to the ward.

After surgery you will be in bed resting. It is important that following exercises are done to prevent complications such as chest infections and blood clots in your legs.

How much pain will I experience post-operatively?

Almost all patient will have Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA pump) for pain management. PCA is a method of pain control that gives patients the power to control their pain. Most patients will also have wound catheters for regional pain management. You may experience some pain from your incisions, especially on movement. If you do, the nurses will give you analgesia. At the time of discharge, you will be given a supply of painkillers. After about 7 days most of the discomfort should disappear.

When can I eat after the operation?

You should be able to drink small amounts of water on the first day after the operation. If you tolerate that well, you will be allowed to drink more later that day.

You will be allowed to have some soft diet on the second day. Most patients are able to eat normal diet in about 3 or 4 days after the operation.

Recovery and discharge.

- The doctors will advise you regarding postoperative diet and nutrition.
- You will also be advised regarding return to regular and daily activities.
- Nurses in the ward will check your wound before discharge and suggest regarding dressing change.
- On the day of discharge you will be given medication to take home. You will be explained regarding the timing and duration of medication to be taken.
- What to avoid after discharge

- Excessive activity/heavy lifting
- Over exertion
- Alcohol intake

When can I start driving?

You should not drive for at least a month after liver surgery. Before driving you should ensure that you could perform a full emergency stop, have the strength and capability to control the car, and be able to respond quickly to any situation that may occur. Please be aware that driving whilst unfit may invalidate your insurance, and you should check with the conditions of your insurance policy as they do vary.

When Can I drink alcohol after going home?

It is advised to avoid any alcohol for at least 3 months after liver resection. This is the time when the liver will be regenerating. After this period you may take alcohol in moderation (the usual maximum weekly allowance).

When to Contact Your Surgeons ?

- If pain does not go away
- If pain gets worse
- If you have fever more than 38°C
- If you have continuous vomiting
- Swelling, redness, bleeding or bad-smelling discharge from the wound.