



The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS's ability to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we all would like. It is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. We apologise for any delay and this document will provide you with more information on how you can remain in optimal health whilst you are waiting.

## Keep moving and improve your health

Having surgery can have a big impact on your body. We are here to support you to prepare both physically and mentally. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle can boost your post-operative recovery and small changes can make a difference. Any preparation will help you get the best from the treatment options available.

We are working with Your Health Your Way, who are a local wellbeing service who can offer guidance and support whilst making these changes. More information can be found on their website at: [www.yourhealthnotts.co.uk](http://www.yourhealthnotts.co.uk)

To access this support please give us a call on 01623 676069 or email us at: [sfh-tr.contactsfh@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.contactsfh@nhs.net)

## Healthy eating

Healthy eating is about enjoying your meals and at the same time having a balance of different foods. Being mindful about what we eat can help us to maintain a healthy body weight. This can benefit us by ensuring our bodies have the nutrients it needs for growth and repair both before and after surgery.

### **A balanced diet consists of:**

- At least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day
- Potatoes, bread, rice and pasta
- Beans, pulses, fish, eggs and meat
- Dairy and alternatives
- Oils and spreads.

For more information regarding healthy eating please go to: [www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/)

## Take your medication

It is important while you are waiting for an appointment or treatment that you continue to look after your general health. You can do this by continuing to take any medication you have been prescribed for your condition, as well as any prescribed to manage your symptoms such as pain.

If you feel that you have a health problem which is not well controlled, it may be of benefit to have it reviewed prior to surgery.

## Exercise

Having a good level of fitness can make surgery safer and reduce any complications. Even short bursts of exercise make surgery safer. A few minutes here and there add up. It all makes a difference.

It is suggested that we should aim for 150 minutes of physical activity a week. This can help to maintain a healthy weight, boost your mood, promote better sleep, and can keep your muscles, bones and joints healthy. This can be achieved through activities such as walking, swimming, and cycling.

Regular exercise can reduce your risk of illnesses, such as coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and cancer. It can also lower your risk of early death by 30%.

- **NHS Fitness Studio:** [www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/)  
Provides exercise videos tailored to a range of fitness levels.
- **NHS Active 10:** A smartphone app which helps to track your activity throughout the day.

### **Other useful resources with more information on exercise:**

- [www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/heart-matters-magazine/activity/chair-based-exercises](http://www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/heart-matters-magazine/activity/chair-based-exercises)
- [www.nhs.uk/better-health/get-active/](http://www.nhs.uk/better-health/get-active/)

## Smoking

Smoking is one of the biggest causes of death and illness in the UK. Stopping smoking increases your chances of living a longer and healthier life. You'll feel the benefits from the day you quit.

Prior to surgery we suggest you cut down on smoking to help reduce complications and help healing. We can help to support you with this.

Visit [www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/](http://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/)

### **Look at what happens when you quit for good:**

- 20 Minutes – your pulse will return to normal.
- 72 Hours – breathing will be easier and energy will be increasing.
- 1 year – your risk of a heart attack will be halved compared to a smoker's.
- 10 years – your risk of death from lung cancer will have halved compared with a smoker's.

### **For further information, depending on where you live, please contact:**

- [www.yourhealthnotts.co.uk/stop-smoking/](http://www.yourhealthnotts.co.uk/stop-smoking/)
- [www.livelifebetterderbyshire.org.uk/services/stopping-smoking/stopping-smoking.aspx](http://www.livelifebetterderbyshire.org.uk/services/stopping-smoking/stopping-smoking.aspx)

## **Alcohol**

Drinking more than 14 units per week (1 unit = 1 small glass of wine or ½ a pint of beer) for both men and women increases your risk of complications. This is because excessive alcohol intake damages your liver.

Your liver plays an essential role in helping you fight off infections and produces new proteins needed for wound healing. Consider cutting down or not drinking any alcohol in the lead up to your operation to enable your liver to work as well as possible. If you do drink alcohol, try to have alcohol-free days.

**Drink Free Days App:** A free app that provides simple and practical tips to help control your drinking.

### **With the app you can:**

- Update and track your drink free days
- Get tips to control drinking
- Receive reminders when you need it most
- Celebrate milestones when you reach your targets

**[www.nhs.uk/better-health/drink-less/](http://www.nhs.uk/better-health/drink-less/)**

# Good mental health

Surgery can be daunting for most people. Anxiety and depression are very common both before and after surgery, especially combined with shielding/self-isolation.

Recovering from major surgery doesn't always go smoothly – there can be ups and downs along the way, both in your physical and mental health. Stress can lead to poor sleep and tiredness, which in turn reduces physical activity and can contribute to a low mood and feelings of depression. Sometimes these feelings can become severe enough to need help.

**There are lots of things we can do to maintain a good mental health. Some of these are:**

- Keeping active
- Eating well
- Getting good sleep
- Keeping in touch with support networks.

To learn more about how to maintain a good mental health, please follow the link below:

**[www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-wellbeing-tips/top-tips-to-improve-your-mental-wellbeing](http://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-wellbeing-tips/top-tips-to-improve-your-mental-wellbeing)**

To find a local NHS urgent mental health helpline (England) please follow the link below:

**[www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline](http://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline)**

# Financial support

Waiting for treatment could be impacting you financially, which can affect your mental and physical health. It can affect how many hours you are able to work and how much you are able to earn. If you are struggling to pay bills, need help with a benefits issue, or are concerned about growing debt, there is free confidential advice and support to help you. Please contact the organisations below to find out more:

**Step Change Debt Charity** – [www.stepchange.org/](http://www.stepchange.org/)

**Turn2us** – [www.turn2us.org.uk/Get-Support](http://www.turn2us.org.uk/Get-Support)

**NHS Low Income Scheme** – [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-low-income-scheme](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-low-income-scheme)

**Citizens Advice** – [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/)

# Further support

We are here to provide you with the information and support you need to stay as healthy as possible, so your surgery goes well, and you recover faster.

Please contact us with anything you are unsure about. To access further support from Your Health Your Way please give us a call on 01623 676069 or email us at: [sfh-tr.contactsfh@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.contactsfh@nhs.net)

## Further sources of information

NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions)

Our website: [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

## Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

**King's Mill Hospital:** 01623 672222

**Newark Hospital:** 01636 685692

**Email:** [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net)

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net).

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email [sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net) or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

To be completed by the Communications office  
Leaflet code: PIL202208-01-SHG  
Created: Aug 2022 / Review Date: Aug 2024