



Patient Information Service

Theatres and Critical Care Business Unit

Going to the Operating Theatres

What is going to happen to me?

Southend University Hospital 
NHS Foundation Trust





We appreciate that you may be nervous or anxious before having your operation and we hope this information will help to make your stay as comfortable as possible.

Background information

Our operating department consists of ten theatres, which cover various specialties such as general surgery, gynaecology, urology, orthopaedics, ear, nose and throat, maxillo-facial and plastic surgery.

There is a post-operative recovery ward where you will be kept under close observation until you return to your ward.

Before your operation

You will have gone through the pre-assessment process prior to your admission, during which your anaesthetic and surgery will be explained and it will be determined that you are fit enough for your procedure.

The hospital can be a colder environment than your own home. Please bring your dressing gown, slippers and warm clothing with you and tell a member of the ward staff if you feel cold at any time during your stay in hospital.

On admission a doctor will visit you, asking you questions and give you information about your operation. The doctor may draw an arrow on your skin in the area where you are to have your operation. Another doctor, an anaesthetist will visit you on the ward to discuss with you the various types of anaesthesia and the type that is most suitable for you and your operation. This may be general, local, epidural or spinal.





You will not be allowed to eat or drink after a certain time, which is called fasting. If you smoke, you should avoid smoking during the fasting period.

It is important that you alert the ward nurse to the possibility of you being pregnant. There could be risks associated with anaesthesia and Xray which you can discuss with the doctor.

The day of your operation

You will be asked to have a shower, or bath, and dress in a theatre gown. The ward staff will advise you of procedures.

You will be collected from the ward by a member of the theatre staff and taken, in your bed, to the operating department. You will be escorted to theatre by a member of the ward staff.

The anaesthetic room

When you reach the anaesthetic room you will be greeted by a member of the anaesthetic team, who will ask you similar questions to the ones you were asked on the ward, as a final check.

It is routine for all patients receiving an operation to be monitored as follows:

- three sticky discs will be placed on your skin, usually on your chest, to enable us to check your heart beat
- a blood pressure cuff will be placed around your arm
- a clip, similar to a clothes peg, will be placed on your finger to check oxygen levels in your blood





- The anaesthetist will insert a small tube, called a cannula, into the back of your hand or in your arm. This is used to give you your anaesthetic drugs.

After your operation

You will wake up in the post-operative recovery ward.

You may be connected to a drip, which will give you fluids, until you are eating and drinking. You will have a clear oxygen mask on your face. The oxygen will help your recovery from the anaesthetic.

Experienced nurses will be with you at all times whilst you are in the recovery room. If you experience pain, the nursing staff will be able to give you analgesia (painkillers).

If you have had a spinal/epidural anaesthetic, you may not be able to move your legs or they may feel numb; this is quite usual and normal feeling and movement will return. People recover from this type of anaesthesia at different times.

You will stay in the post-operative ward until you have recovered sufficiently from your anaesthesia, and depending on the type of operation you have had.









Patient Information Service

www.southend.nhs.uk

For a translated, large print or audio tape version of this document please contact:

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