



Postopcare.info

# Complete Recovery & Discharge Pack

A printable set of trackers, checklists and reference sheets to help you organise the days and weeks after surgery — for yourself or someone you're caring for.

**Compiled from NHS · NICE · AAOS · healthdirect published guidance**

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General information only — see disclaimer, page 2

# How to use this pack

This pack brings together the free interactive tools from [postopcare.info](https://postopcare.info) in one printable set, so you have something physical to keep by the bed, on the fridge, or in a hospital bag — no login, no app, nothing to charge.

### What's inside

- Recovery at a Glance — a blank timeline to note what your own surgical team tells you
- Medication Schedule Tracker
- Pain Tracker Log (14 days)
- Wound Care Checklist
- Red-Flag Card — when to get urgent help (cut-out size)
- Hospital Discharge Checklist
- Questions to Ask Your Care Team
- Follow-Up Appointment Tracker
- Driving & Return-to-Work Planner
- Emergency Contacts Sheet

### ⚠ Before you start

This pack is general information only, compiled from published clinical guidelines. It is not medical advice and does not replace what your own surgeon, GP, or care team tells you. Always follow their specific instructions over anything written here. If you are ever unsure or worried, contact your care team or call your local emergency number — don't wait for this pack to tell you what to do.

Free, always-updated versions of these tools (with interactive timelines, reminders and procedure-specific guidance) remain available at no cost at [postopcare.info](https://postopcare.info). This printable pack is a convenience format for people who want one physical document to carry or post on the fridge.

YOUR TIMELINE

# Recovery at a Glance

Ask your surgical team to help you fill in the timeline below before you leave hospital, or as soon as you can afterwards. Every recovery is individual — these are placeholders for *your* team's specific instructions, not general rules to follow instead of them.

| Stage                              | What my team told me to expect / do |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Day 0–1</b><br>In hospital      |                                     |
| <b>Days 2–7</b><br>First week home |                                     |
| <b>Weeks 2–6</b>                   |                                     |
| <b>Months 2–3</b>                  |                                     |
| <b>Longer term</b>                 |                                     |

Things my team specifically said to avoid / watch for

**My next scheduled review / follow-up**  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ With: \_\_\_\_\_

## Medication Schedule Tracker

Use one row per medication. Tick each box as you take a dose — this is especially useful if more than one person is helping with care, or if you're prone to forgetting whether a dose was taken.

| Medication & dose | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun | Notes |
|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
|                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |
|                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |
|                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |
|                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |
|                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |
|                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |

**Never double up on a missed dose without checking first.** If you're not sure what to do about a missed or late dose, contact your pharmacist or GP rather than guessing.

A free interactive version of this tracker, with reminders, is available at [postopcare.info](https://postopcare.info).

## Pain Tracker Log

Rate your pain once or twice a day using the 0–10 scale below (0 = no pain, 10 = worst pain imaginable). A written record like this is genuinely useful to show your GP or surgical team — it's hard to remember "how bad was it on day 4" from memory alone.

| Day | Morning (0–10) | Evening (0–10) | Pain relief taken | Notes (what helped, what made it worse) |
|-----|----------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1   |                |                |                   |                                         |
| 2   |                |                |                   |                                         |
| 3   |                |                |                   |                                         |
| 4   |                |                |                   |                                         |
| 5   |                |                |                   |                                         |
| 6   |                |                |                   |                                         |
| 7   |                |                |                   |                                         |

**Pain that is getting steadily worse rather than better**, especially a few days after surgery, is worth mentioning to your care team promptly rather than waiting for your next scheduled review.

## Wound Care Checklist

General wound care guidance compiled from NHS and NICE sources. Always follow any specific dressing/wound instructions your surgical team gave you first.

- ☐ Keep the wound clean and dry unless your team has told you it's okay to shower/bathe over it.
- ☐ Wash your hands before and after touching the dressing or wound area.
- ☐ Check the wound once a day (or ask someone to check it for you) for changes in redness, swelling, warmth, or discharge.
- ☐ Don't pick at scabs or remove steri-strips/clips before you're told to.
- ☐ Keep a photo diary if you can — it's much easier to judge "is this getting better or worse" by comparing photos than by memory.
- ☐ Wear loose, clean clothing over the wound area where possible.
- ☐ Follow any instructions about avoiding swimming pools, baths, or soaking the area until cleared.

### Signs that need prompt medical attention

- Increasing redness, warmth, swelling, or pain around the wound
- Discharge that is yellow/green, increasing in amount, or has an odour
- The wound edges separating or gaping open
- Fever or feeling generally unwell
- Red streaking spreading away from the wound

A free, interactive "Is This Normal?" wound decision-support tool is available at [postopcare.info](https://postopcare.info), based on NICE NG125.

## When to Get Urgent Help

Print this page and keep it somewhere visible — on the fridge, by the bed, or folded in a wallet. The bottom half is sized to cut out as a card.

**Call emergency services (999 UK · 000 Australia · 911 US/Canada · 111 NZ · 112 EU/India, or your local equivalent) immediately for:**

- Chest pain or sudden breathlessness
- Sudden, severe swelling, redness or pain in the calf (possible blood clot)
- Heavy bleeding that won't stop with firm pressure
- Confusion, fainting, or difficulty waking someone
- Any symptom your surgical team specifically told you to treat as an emergency

**Contact your GP, surgical team, or an urgent-care line (e.g. NHS 111) the same day for:**

- Fever or feeling generally unwell
- Increasing wound redness, warmth, swelling or discharge
- Pain that is getting worse rather than better
- Any symptom you're simply not sure about — it's always okay to ask

✂ cut along this line

### IN AN EMERGENCY

**Chest pain, sudden breathlessness, heavy bleeding, confusion → call emergency services now**

999 UK · 000 AU · 911 US/CA · 111 NZ · 112 EU/India · [postopcare.info](https://postopcare.info)

## Hospital Discharge Checklist

General prompts, compiled from published NHS discharge guidance, for things worth confirming before you leave. Not every item applies to every surgery — use what's relevant.

- ☐ I understand what medications I've been prescribed, what they're for, and how/when to take them
- ☐ I know what pain relief I can take at home and how often
- ☐ I know how to care for my wound/dressing, and when it will next be checked or changed
- ☐ I know what activities to avoid, and for how long (lifting, driving, bathing, exercise)
- ☐ I have a follow-up appointment booked, or know how to book one
- ☐ I know who to contact with questions, and how (phone number, hours)
- ☐ I know the specific warning signs for my surgery that mean I should seek urgent help
- ☐ I have arranged transport home
- ☐ I have arranged help at home for the first few days if I need it
- ☐ I have any equipment I was told I'd need (raised toilet seat, crutches, etc.)

# Questions to Ask Your Care Team

It's easy to forget questions in the moment, especially when you're anxious or on pain medication. Jot down your own questions here before an appointment, and use the space underneath to note the answer.

| Question | Answer |
|----------|--------|
|          |        |
|          |        |
|          |        |
|          |        |
|          |        |
|          |        |

## Common starting points

- What specific signs should I watch for with my type of surgery?
- When can I expect to return to normal activities, work, or driving?
- What's the best way to reach you if something comes up out of hours?

## Follow-Up Appointment Tracker

| Date | With | Purpose | Notes / outcome |
|------|------|---------|-----------------|
|      |      |         |                 |
|      |      |         |                 |
|      |      |         |                 |
|      |      |         |                 |
|      |      |         |                 |
|      |      |         |                 |
|      |      |         |                 |

## Driving & Return-to-Work Planner

General guidance timelines vary a lot by surgery type and are set by your own surgical team. Use this page to record what you were specifically told, not a generic rule.

|                                                                               | What I was told |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Driving</b><br>Check with your insurer too — some require surgeon sign-off |                 |
| <b>Return to work</b><br>Note any modified-duties period                      |                 |
| <b>Exercise / sport</b>                                                       |                 |
| <b>Lifting restrictions</b>                                                   |                 |

## Emergency & Care Contacts Sheet

Fill this in and keep it with this pack, or stick a copy on the fridge. Useful for you, for anyone helping care for you, and for any paramedic or out-of-hours doctor who needs the picture quickly.

| Contact                  | Name                                                | Phone |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Surgeon / surgical team  |                                                     |       |
| GP / family doctor       |                                                     |       |
| Pharmacy                 |                                                     |       |
| Next of kin / main carer |                                                     |       |
| Second emergency contact |                                                     |       |
| Local emergency number   | 999 UK · 000 AU · 911 US/CA · 111 NZ · 112 EU/India |       |

### Key medical details worth having to hand

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Known allergies             |  |
| Current regular medications |  |
| Relevant medical conditions |  |
| Blood type (if known)       |  |

This sheet is for your own organisational use. It is not a legal document and does not record or replace any formal advance care directive, enduring power of attorney, or similar legal arrangement — if you need one of those, speak with a solicitor or your local statutory body.

### Where this guidance comes from

Every general guideline in this pack is compiled and summarised from published clinical guidance, not written or verified by a clinician specifically for your situation. Sources referenced across [postopcare.info](https://postopcare.info) include:

- NHS (National Health Service, UK) patient information and trust discharge guidance
- NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) guidelines, including NG125 (surgical site infection) and NG89 (venous thromboembolism)
- AAOS (American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons) patient resources
- healthdirect Australia
- DVLA / Austroads driving-after-surgery guidance

#### Full disclaimer

This pack provides general information only, compiled from publicly published clinical guidelines. It is not medical advice, is not a substitute for professional medical care, and should never be used to make decisions about your health in place of your own surgeon, GP, or care team. [Postopcare.info](https://postopcare.info) does not review, verify, or endorse any individual's use of this material, and does not claim clinical authorship. If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call your local emergency number immediately: 000 (Australia) · 111 (New Zealand) · 999 (UK, Ireland & Singapore) · 911 (USA & Canada) · 112 (European Union & India) · or your country's equivalent.

#### About [postopcare.info](https://postopcare.info)

[Postopcare.info](https://postopcare.info) is a free, independent resource that turns dense clinical guidance into interactive, easy-to-follow recovery guides. It is run by Digital Treasure Pty Ltd and is not affiliated with or endorsed by the NHS, NICE, AAOS, or any health authority. All free tools referenced in this pack remain available at no cost at [\*\*postopcare.info\*\*](https://postopcare.info).

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