



PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

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1. Welcome

Dear Sir/Madam

It is with great pleasure that Netcare Healthcare UK Limited (Netcare) welcomes you to the Scottish Regional Treatment Centre (SRTC). We wish to take this opportunity to thank you for choosing Netcare for your medical needs and care.

We are delighted that we are able to offer you an early appointment for the treatment of your condition and commit ourselves to ensuring that your stay with us is as comfortable and pleasant as possible.

As part of the NHS Treatment Centre initiative, Netcare has been contracted to perform surgery on NHS patients in your area. Netcare is a large, respected South African healthcare provider which has been appointed after a lengthy and rigorous selection process. For some time now, Netcare has treated patients in England on behalf of the NHS and we are now privileged to work in partnership with the NHS in Scotland.

Prior to your arrival at the SRTC, please take the time to read this booklet which serves as an information guideline for you, your family and friends. Being prepared and knowing what to expect before, during and after your surgery, will greatly ease any of your anxieties. Familiarising yourself with the hospital and its services; together with your anticipated 'journey' from admission through to discharge and what to expect along the way; will help make your visit far less stressful. To assist us in evaluating and maintaining high standards and quality care, we would appreciate your feedback. After your treatment, please take a few moments to complete and return the patient satisfaction questionnaire.

On behalf of Netcare, we wish you a speedy recovery and a comfortable stay in our facility. We look forward to making a positive difference in the lives of the patients entrusted to our care.

Yours sincerely

Dr Richard Friedland
Chief Executive Officer
Netcare Healthcare UK Limited

1.1 About Netcare

Network Healthcare Holdings Limited (Netcare) is one of the largest integrated private healthcare organisations in South Africa. Listed on the Johannesburg Securities Exchange (JSE) in 1996, the Netcare group owns and manages 45 private hospitals and clinics, 61 specialised medical centres and 53 Medicross Family Medical and Dental Centres throughout South Africa. In total, Netcare hospitals comprise 7,200 beds, 319 operating theatres – all of which are supported by over 2,200 medical practitioners in private practice. Collectively, over 4.8 million patients a year are cared for in medical facilities within the Netcare group.

Specialised hubs of clinical excellence focused on disciplines such as cardiology, cardiothoracic surgery, neurosurgery, orthopaedic surgery, gastroenterology, oncology, ophthalmology, renal dialysis and organ transplantation, are situated in numerous Netcare hospitals around South Africa.

1.2 The Netcare/NHS Treatment Centre Partnership

During the past two years, Netcare has participated in four successful NHS Waiting List Initiatives. These initiatives were specific to ophthalmology; orthopaedic surgery; and ear, nose and throat surgery. Netcare has received a number of positive responses from patients who are delighted with the services and care rendered within the scope of these Waiting List Initiatives.

The NHS is committed to reducing waiting times for those needing certain surgical procedures and to improving patient's choice and access to facilities. To this end, in 2003, the NHS announced its Treatment Centre programme which was introduced to provide rapid, safe and effective medical treatment to NHS patients on Waiting Lists.

The Netcare and NHS partnership upholds the NHS' principle of delivering excellent service free at the point of access. Providing the highest possible quality of care, while maintaining patient dignity at all times, is a fundamental objective of the partnership.

1.3 About the Netcare Staff

Netcare's medical team consist of highly skilled, experienced consultant surgeons, anaesthetists and nursing personnel who are supported by administrative, technological and patient care teams. We dedicate our efforts to providing you with quality care in a safe, efficient and caring environment.

All staff attending to you at SRTC have been hand-picked from many applicants for their abilities and qualifications. The medical specialists are registered with the General Medical Council on the Specialists Register and the various Royal Colleges in their areas of speciality.

Nurses are registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and physiotherapists with the Health Professions Council (HPC) and the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP). In our determination to maintain excellent standards, all members of staff are required to keep abreast of current best practice and are subject to peer reviews.

The surgeons will regularly examine you, discuss your programme and notify you of any plans for tests or changes in your treatment. They will answer any questions and, on your discharge, will arrange for a follow-up visit.

Netcare's nursing staff will care for you throughout your stay. They will ensure that you receive your appropriate medications, carry out any medical treatments or diagnostic tests on the doctor's instructions and provide information to prepare for your discharge.

During your stay, nursing staff can be called by pressing the "Call" button next to your bed. Each nurse will wear a name badge which will allow you to easily identify them by name.

Physiotherapists will help you regain your strength after surgery and ensure that you are mobile before you are discharged. They will determine whether you are able to cope once you have returned home after your surgery and will also provide any equipment which will assist you in safely regaining your mobility.

There are numerous other staff members involved in your care who will be in and out of the ward, e.g. housekeepers, porters and administrative staff. Each and every one of these individuals plays an important role in the SRTC and is dedicated to your care. Please feel free to ask questions or request any assistance.

1.4 Service Evaluation

Our only means of gauging whether we successfully met your expectations at the SRTC is by asking you, the patient, to take a few minutes to evaluate our service. This can be done by completing and returning the patient satisfaction questionnaire that is handed to you upon your discharge from SRTC. Your comments are greatly valued and we appreciate the time taken to assist us in monitoring our levels of care.

1.5 Dealing with Complaints

In the spirit of constructive criticism, you, your family or friends may wish to bring a matter to the attention of the Netcare staff. You have the right to make

a complaint. Netcare staff will listen to you respectfully and with understanding. Please address any complaints directly to the Treatment Centre Manager.

Once your complaint has been formalised with the Treatment Centre Manager, the matter will be thoroughly and speedily investigated on an impartial basis and in a professional manner. After receiving the complaint, the Treatment Centre Manager will report back to you within 24 hours, acknowledging that the matter is in hand. During the time that the investigation is underway, you will receive feedback from the Treatment Centre Manager on a regular basis until the issue is resolved. They will contact you by telephone with a full explanation and summary of the actions taken to prevent future similar problems. This will be followed by a letter of apology from the management of the SRTC, should it be deemed necessary.

1.6 Your Responsibilities as a Patient

By taking an active role in your own healthcare, you can assist the surgical team to optimally meet your medical needs. It is particularly important that you:

- Inform us of your expectations regarding the hospital and your treatment.
- Ask questions and make sure that you understand any instructions given to you regarding how to care for yourself once you leave the hospital.
- Be open and honest about your health history including any current medications, and/or the use of legal or illegal addictive substances.
- Let us know if you struggle to follow the plan of care which has been prescribed, or if matters do not seem to be going well, so that together, we can develop the right plan for you.
- Appoint a healthcare proxy or formulate an advanced directive so that we are aware of the kind of the care you would want if you were unable to communicate.
- Express concerns in a respectful manner and use the existing process as outlined in this booklet for complaints.

1.7 Your Rights as a Patient

As a valued SRTC patient, you have a number of important rights. Please familiarise yourself with these before your operation:

- You may prefer to be addressed by a particular name. We are happy to accommodate you and once you have informed our staff about your preference, you should expect to be addressed by your preferred name.
- Irrespective of your age, any disability, race, religion, gender, ethnic or social origin, cultural beliefs, language spoken or sexual orientation;

every patient has the right to receive safe, adequate medical care and should not be discriminated against in any way.

- In the event of a life threatening situation, you have the right to expect and receive appropriate emergency medical care.
- In the event of a medical emergency or complication, you should have the right to refuse to be resuscitated. If this is your wish, you need to communicate clearly with the doctor and hospital staff before your operation.
- You are allowed to actively participate in the decision-making process regarding any medical treatment that will affect your health. You are also encouraged to make educated, informed choices about your medical care.
- You are entitled to have access to appropriately trained healthcare professionals.
- Importantly, if you feel you would like a second medical opinion, you are quite within your rights and should make your request known.
- You should expect to receive medical care in an environment which is safe and protects both your physical and mental health.
- Medical professionals tasked with the responsibility of administering your treatment and caring for you, should do so courteously.
- Healthcare professionals treating you should wear a name badge and should be identifiable by name.
- You may choose to be treated by a medical professional of a specific gender.
- You have a right to privacy.
- You have the right to confidentiality and should expect all medical professionals who are treating you to adhere to this.
- You have the right to dignity and to be treated in a dignified manner.
- Medical professionals should respect your personal preferences and requests.
- You are free to practice any specific religious or cultural beliefs and should expect medical professionals to respectfully accept these views.
- To enable you to make a free and informed decision as to whether to accept or refuse any proposed treatment, examination, investigations or continued stay in hospital; you are entitled to a clear explanation about the nature and status of your illness, the significance of any investigations, examinations and proposed treatments, as well as information on the risks and side effects of the proposed and alternative investigations.
- Just as one has the right to be fully informed about an illness or condition, you are perfectly entitled to choose to remain uninformed about the nature of your illness or condition and have your wishes respected and documented.
- You have the right to be informed about prescribed medications; to the safe and correct usage of prescribed medications; to alternative forms of treatment or care; to healthcare education; and to other resources and services which promote a healthy lifestyle.
- Complete and full access to your medical records is your right according to the Data Protection Act (1998).

- It is also your prerogative to refuse to undergo any medical treatment.
- You should complain about healthcare issues that do not meet with your satisfaction.
- You have the right to organ donation.
- You have the right to receive palliative care or care for the terminally ill.
- You have the right to a peaceful and dignified death
- You have the right to appropriate religious attention/observations at the time of death and dying.
- You have the right to receive blood transfusions.

2. Your Anticipated Treatment Plan

2.1 Pre-operative Assessment Clinic

A few weeks before your anticipated surgery, SRTC will schedule an appointment for you to attend a pre-operative assessment clinic at the SRTC or a clinic local to you. A letter indicating the date and time of your appointment will be sent to you.

Depending on your specific needs, this appointment might last from one to two hours. Be sure to bring a list of the current medicines you are taking or bring the actual medicine to the clinic if you are unsure. Remember to include prescription medicines, any over-the-counter medicines and any herb or vitamin supplements. Please bring the name and telephone number of your GP or any specialists who care for you.

At the pre-operative assessment clinic, you will meet the SRTC clinical team which will assess and prepare you for your surgery. If you are unable to speak English, kindly notify the staff before your arrival and an interpreter will be arranged.

A member of staff will be there to welcome you and confirm your personal details.

A nurse will take your medical history and it is important that you give as much detail as possible about your past medical background as this might affect the outcome of your pending surgery. Your blood pressure, temperature, pulse, respiration, urine and weight will be checked. A blood sample may be required to be taken depending on the nature of your surgery. The nurse will ask you about the medicines you are using and whether you have any allergies.

An anaesthetist will examine you and discuss the various types of anaesthesia as well as methods of pain control. You will also have access to an anaesthetist before the procedure, either in the ward or in the operating theatre.

A surgeon will examine you and discuss your forthcoming surgery in detail. All the benefits and risks associated with the surgery will be explained and

only once you are perfectly sure about what the surgery entails, will you be asked to consent to your surgery.

A physiotherapist may also discuss your rehabilitation after surgery. This will enable them to personalise and adjust your rehabilitation plan, making it easier for you to manage your activities.

2.2 Surgery Date

At your pre-operative assessment clinic appointment you will be given the date and time of surgery, when you should arrive at the SRTC and where you should report to on the day of your operation. This will be confirmed in writing a few days later.

Please note; In order for us to maintain a high quality of care and prevent any possible risks, we respectfully request your permission to display your details at your bedside. Your initials, surname, doctor's name and possible risk factors, e.g. diabetes, will be displayed above your bed.

3. Preparing for Surgery

During the day of your surgery, please do not eat or drink anything ("nil by mouth") unless you have been informed differently by the doctor. Failure to adhere to this important instruction might mean that your operation could be cancelled – for your own safety. The doctor will advise you on how and when to take current medications. Avoid smoking for as long as possible before your surgery.

On the day of your surgery, you may brush your teeth and use mouthwash as long as you are careful not to swallow anything. Do not eat or drink anything unless otherwise instructed.

3.1 What to Bring to Hospital

Wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothes and low-heeled shoes that are easy to store in a locker. On arrival, you will be given a hospital gown to change into. You may want to bring along a crossword puzzle or book to read during waiting times.

Avoid bringing valuables with you such as cash, jewellery, credit cards, etc. No jewellery whatsoever should be worn. As storage facilities are limited, the SRTC cannot take responsibility for any valuables whilst you undergo surgery.

4. The Day of Surgery

On arrival, please check in with the ward clerk. Before your surgery, one of the nurses will check your details and take your temperature, pulse and blood pressure. Any questions or concerns you might have can be discussed at this

point. Thereafter, you will change into your hospital gown and will be taken through to the operating theatre.

4.1 Operating Theatre

When you get to the theatre, you will be introduced to the theatre staff who will once again verify your details. You will then be taken to the anaesthetic room where the anaesthetist will be waiting for you. An intravenous line will be inserted into your arm to administer fluids and medicines during the procedure.

You may find the temperature in the operating room a little cooler than elsewhere in the hospital and if you are uncomfortable, please notify the staff. You will be shifted onto the theatre table either before or after you have been anaesthetised.

If you are having a general anaesthetic, an oxygen mask will be placed over your nose and mouth. This may have a strange odour. Medicines which will help you drift off to “sleep” almost immediately will be administered, either through the mask or the intravenous line. If you are having a spinal/epidural, regional or local anaesthetic, the anaesthetist will describe what you should be feeling as part of your body is numbed.

5. After Surgery

After your surgery, you will be taken into the recovery ward where you will be observed closely until you have fully recovered from your anaesthetic. Recovery times vary from person to person. Once you are stable, you will either be discharged home (in the case of minor procedure) or you will be transferred to the progressive care unit or general ward, depending on your procedure.

If you are going to be discharged home, make sure that someone is available to drive you and take care of you for the first 24 hours. If you are to remain in hospital, you will be closely monitored and cared for until you are able to resume a reasonable amount of independence. Remember, you need time to recuperate after surgery.

6. Discharge

Recovery from your operation does not end when you are discharged from the hospital. In addition to this booklet, the surgeon will give you instructions that relate specifically to your surgery. The nurse will explain the discharge instructions and answer your questions or concerns.

Be sure that you understand everything thoroughly before leaving the hospital. The SRTC will provide you with written instructions regarding your recovery, which you will be able to review and refer to afterwards.

Transport to and from the hospital will be discussed as well as whether assistance is required at home after surgery. Please arrange for a responsible adult to escort you home after your surgery. If you live alone, arrangements should be made (before the day of your surgery) with family or friends to visit and assist you in the initial post-operative period.

6.1 Follow-up Appointment

Before leaving the SRTC, a follow-up appointment may be scheduled. You should be clear on the date, time and venue of the appointment before you leave the hospital.

7. At Home

If you leave hospital on the same day that you had your surgery, continue to rest at home after your anaesthetic. Depending on the nature of your surgical procedure, it is likely that you will not feel up to doing much for the rest of the day or a few days thereafter.

If you have any queries or concerns, you may contact the SRTC Advice Line on 01356 665225, or call your local GP, or go to you nearest Accident and Emergency Department.

7.1 Normal Symptoms

For your information, the following symptoms constitute the normal after-effects of surgery:

- Generally, you just don't feel well.
- Surgical pain. All surgery involves some pain and your surgeon will prescribe the necessary pain medication to help you through the first few days following your operation. If your medication does not relieve your pain and you are experiencing stomach irritation, nausea or an allergic reaction (skin rash, itching etc.), call the SRTC Advice Line on 01356 665225. Make sure that you take medications as directed and never take medicine on an empty stomach as this will cause unnecessary nausea. Pain control is important as it facilitates movement and mobility and enables you to walk, take deep breaths and cough – activities which all contribute significantly to your recovery. It is not advisable to drive while you are taking painkillers.
- Muscle aches.
- Drowsiness.
- A sore throat.
- Nausea and vomiting. You may be nauseous or could even vomit after a general anaesthetic. This is normally only a temporary side effect which should disappear within a few hours. If by the next day, you are still nauseous or vomiting, call the SRTC Advice Line on 01356 665225, contact your local GP, or call the nearest Accident and Emergency Department.

- Headaches.
- Dizziness.
- A sore mouth or jaw.

These symptoms may persist from one to three days following surgery or may not even occur at all.

7.2 Complications

Contact the SRTC Advice Line on 01356 665225, call your local GP or go to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department if you experience:

- Severe pain (even after taking painkillers).
- Prolonged, excessive bleeding. If the bleeding does not stop within half an hour, call in at the nearest Accident and Emergency Department.
- Persistent vomiting or an inability to tolerate liquids for more than 12 hours.
- Signs of infection after surgery including a fever, chills, increased pain, swelling, foul taste or smell.
- A fever, increased swelling, redness, or drainage are indications that something may be wrong.
- If you have pain in the back of your legs or difficulty breathing, seek immediate medical attention as this could indicate a deep vein thrombosis or pulmonary embolus which needs urgent treatment.

7.3 Coughing

To boost your circulation, clear your lungs and lower your risk of chest infection, breathe deeply and cough several times a day for the first and second days following your surgery. If you have an abdominal incision, hold a pillow tightly over the area for support while coughing. Avoid coughing harshly. You may cough up old blood and your lips might feel dry. Simply rinse your mouth with water and apply some Vaseline to your lips.

7.4 Wound Dressings

Depending on the nature of your surgery, a dressing will cover your operation site and it is advisable not to tamper with or remove it before the doctor instructs you to do so. The doctor will advise you as to when the dressing should be changed.

7.5 Sutures

The surgeon may have used clips or sutures (stitches) to close your wound. The sutures may be dissolvable (usually within seven days) and will not need to be removed. Non-soluble sutures will be removed on the surgeon's

instructions (usually between five and 14 days), depending on the type of procedure which was performed. The doctor will advise you accordingly.

7.6 Activity

Your body should be allowed to heal properly. You will promote and facilitate healing if you balance resting with activity; eat well; and take care of your incision and the dressing. It is generally accepted that you should moving around as soon as possible after surgery. Stay out of bed as much as you can by sitting in a chair and/or walking around. This will play a vital part in speeding up your recovery. Remember, it is normal to tire easily after any surgery.

Only light activities should be performed for the first two weeks. However, depending on your procedure, it is not advisable to pursue any vigorous activity for at least six weeks after surgery. Avoid lifting anything heavy (over 10lbs) or straining when on the toilet.

7.7 Diet

Depending on the surgery that has been performed, you may be required to fast for a while longer after your operation. Check with the nursing staff before you eat or drink anything. Usually, you will break the “nil by mouth fast” with small sips of water, then progress to clear fluids. Please notify the nursing staff of any nausea. You should then slowly begin to eat light foods, finally returning to a normal diet.

7.8 Hygiene

Based on your surgery, you will only be able to bath or shower on the doctor’s instructions. In some cases, it will impede the healing process if the wound gets wet and in other instances, it is extremely important that your dressing remains dry. The doctor will advise you as to what you may or may not do.

8. Visitors

Visitors are welcome between 2pm and 8pm. Visiting children must be over 12 years old, although exceptions can be arranged. Any visitor exposed to or suffering from a communicable disease (including a cold or flu) should not visit the hospital. To respect the comfort of other patients, visitors must be limited to two at a time.

Families are advised to schedule their visits to avoid overwhelming the patient and, while support from loved ones is extremely important, visitors are asked to respect the patient’s need for rest. Visitors are not permitted to smoke while on the hospital’s premises or grounds.

9. Transport

A public bus service to the SRTC is available. Information can be obtained by calling 01382 228345 or visiting the website www.strathtayomnibus.co.uk. Free parking is available in the grounds of Stracathro Hospital.

10. Directions to SRTC

The SRTC is situated on the main A90 between Dundee and Aberdeen behind the Stracathro Shell service station.

11. Cafeteria

A public cafeteria is situated on the grounds of Stracathro Hospital. The opening hours are from 7am to 6:30pm.

12. SRTC Advice Line

The staff at SRTC are available to assist you at any time. You can reach them by calling 01356 665225.

We wish you a comfortable and healing experience at the SRTC and thank you for entrusting your medical care to us.