

Greater Manchester Surgical Centre

An NHS and Netcare Healthcare UK Ltd Initiative



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What You Need To Know About Pain Control



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NHS Treatment Centre



NHS Treatment Centre

This booklet is designed to provide you, the patient, with information and advice regarding your surgery at the Greater Manchester Surgical Centre (GMSC). Please take the time to read the information in this booklet as it will answer many of the questions you may have about your forthcoming surgery.

If you still have any questions after reading through the booklet, please do not hesitate to phone the GMSC Advice Line on 0161 746 2828 where our staff will be more than happy to address any of your queries. You may also access further information on our website at www.netcareuk.com

IMPORTANT: At the time of going to print, the information contained within this booklet was deemed to be accurate.

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Contents

Page

1.	How Much Will It Hurt?	2
2.	Managing Your Pain	3
2.1	Talk to your doctor before your surgery	3
2.2	Relieve your pain but limit side effects	5
2.3	Sticking to your pain plan	5
3.	GMSC Advice Line	6
4.	About Netcare And The NHS Partnership	7
4.1	Netcare	7
4.2	The Netcare/NHS Treatment Centre Partnership	7



1. How Much will it Hurt?

Most patients who are scheduled for surgery experience some degree of anxiety and fear over the anticipated pain associated with their procedure. This is completely normal and wondering just how much your surgery will hurt, how long it will take for your pain to disappear, and how it will impact on your daily life, are normal questions that surface when an operation is imminent.

The level and extent of post-operative pain varies tremendously and is dependent upon a number of factors such as:

- The type of surgery you will undergo. If your surgery is extensive, you may experience more pain than will someone who is undergoing a minor procedure. For example, surgery to replace a joint is more painful and its effects are felt for much longer than, say, surgery to remove a mole.
- Your previous experience with pain and pain medications. Each person experiences pain differently. Importantly, if you're taking regular medication to control pain, you might be less responsive to a pain control drug than someone who doesn't regularly take pain medication.
- The side effects. Anaesthetics used during your surgery and pain medications given to you afterwards can cause side effects. Medications such as morphine can cause nausea, constipation, urine retention, drowsiness, sedation and itching.

While some of these factors are beyond your control, proper management of your pain is important to your post-operative recovery. After surgery, pain can prevent you from moving around – and movement is vital when it comes to gaining back your strength and facilitating your body's healing and recovery process. Movement also prevents blood clots from forming and forcefully coughing can help stop the development of pneumonia. But very often, pain tends to hold one back and can prevent you from performing the very movements and activities that are key to your recovery. Pain can also be so debilitating that it can keep you from getting the necessary rest and sleep.

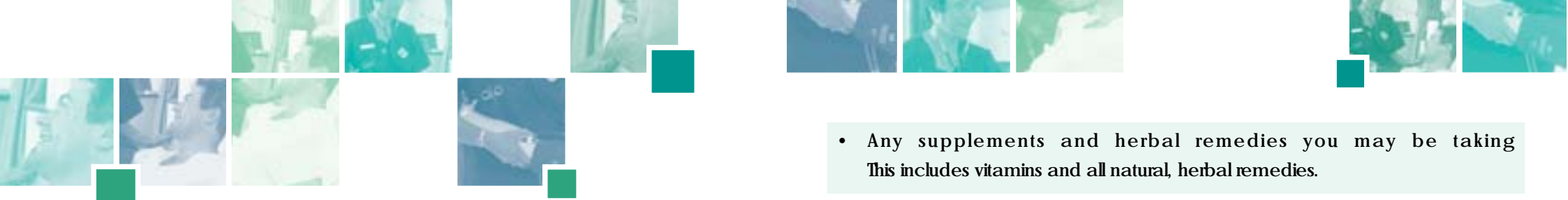
2. Managing Your Pain

So what can you do to keep your post-surgical pain to a minimum? How can you best manage your pain in a manner which speeds up and facilitates your healing process? Here are a few helpful tips which will hopefully guide you in effectively understanding and managing any pain.

2.1 Talk to your doctor before your surgery

You and your doctor should begin working on managing any post-operative pain before your surgery. Talk with the anaesthetist, doctor or nurse about any concerns you have and how your pain will be managed. The anaesthetist - the doctor who will administer the anaesthetic for your surgery - specialises in pain management programmes so you are encouraged to broach any worries with him/her.

Some discussion items you may wish to raise include:



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- **What to expect**
Is there usually pain after the kind of surgery you are undergoing? If so, generally, how severe is the pain and how long does it last after this particular surgical procedure?
- **The plan for treating your pain**
Will you take medicine before the surgery? Will pain medication be given during surgery? What kind of medicine will be prescribed for you after surgery and how will it be administered? What are the possible side effects of these medications?
- **Your concerns regarding surgery and the pain it may cause**
- **Your previous experiences with different kinds of pain control**
Tell your doctor what has and hasn't worked for you in the past. Talk about any concerns you have regarding pain medication or management programmes.
- **Your medications**
Be ready to name all prescribed and over-the-counter medications and the prescribed doses you have taken in the past month.
- **Any drug allergies you may have and any reactions to medications**
- **Any supplements and herbal remedies you may be taking**
This includes vitamins and all natural, herbal remedies.

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2.2 Relieve your pain but limit side effects

Complete relief from pain after your surgery may not always be realistic, but it is important that you are as comfortable as possible. Treating your pain can hasten the healing and recovery process, but conversely, the side effects of pain relief medications can cause discomfort. Your medical team needs to balance your pain control with any side effects.

Try these suggestions which should help relieve your pain while simultaneously minimise any side effects:

- Tell the doctors and the nurses about any pain that you are experiencing and let them know how much and where it hurts.
- You may be asked to rank your pain on a scale from 0-10 with 10 being the worst pain you can imagine. What and how clearly you communicate will greatly assist the doctor and nurses in effectively managing your pain.
- Tell the doctor and nurses about any constipation or nausea you may be experiencing. These are side effects of some medications.
- Ask for pain medication when you feel the first twinges of pain.

2.3 Once at home, be sure to stick to your pain plan

You may have to deal with pain after you have returned home from the hospital. Here are some strategies which will assist you in managing any post-operative pain at home:



- Follow your doctor's instructions for taking pain medication and/or any other medication.
- Follow your doctor's instructions on the prescribed level of physical activity. While stretching and exercising may be part of your recovery plan, overdoing things can trigger and exacerbate pain.
- If your pain medicine causes constipation, drink eight to 10 glasses of water a day, eat a diet that includes fruits and vegetables and try a gentle laxative (ask the doctor to recommend one).
- Contact the doctor if you feel tired, drowsy, sluggish or dizzy.
- Call the doctor if your pain increases or becomes worse while taking pain medication.
- Call the doctor if you notice a significant increase in your pain levels. This may indicate an infection.
- Call the doctor if you run out of pain medication and feel that you need more to keep any pain under control.

Pain control allows appropriate rehabilitation. This does not necessarily mean that you have to be free of pain, but good pain control can give you the strength to do the exercises and make better progress.

3. GMSC Advice Line

The staff at the GMSC are available to assist you at any time. You can reach them by calling: 0161 746 2828.



4. About Netcare And The NHS Partnership

4.1 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 focusing on disciplines such as cardiology, cardiothoracic surgery, neurosurgery, orthopaedic surgery, gastroenterology, oncology, ophthalmology, renal dialysis and organ transplantation are located in numerous Netcare hospitals.

4.2 The Netcare/NHS Treatment Centre Partnership

During the past two years, Netcare has participated in four successful NHS Waiting List Initiatives which were specific to ophthalmology; orthopaedic surgery; and ear, nose and throat surgery.



Committed to reducing waiting times for those needing surgical procedures and to improving choice and access to facilities; in 2003, the NHS launched its Treatment Centre (TC) initiative, a programme designed to provide rapid, safe and effective medical treatment to patients on Waiting Lists.

Against the backdrop of its previous experience with NHS Waiting List Initiatives, Netcare was selected as the successful bidder for two such five-year TC initiatives; the first of which is based on a mobile ophthalmology chain that will perform 44 000 cataract procedures over five years. The second TC initiative will see 45 000 orthopaedic and general surgery procedures performed at the newly-constructed Greater Manchester Surgical Centre (GMSC) over the five-year period.

The Netcare/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.

Netcare's medical team consists of highly skilled, experienced, and professionally qualified consultant surgeons, anaesthetists and nursing personnel, all of whom are supported by an additional administrative, technological and patient care team.

We dedicate our efforts to providing you with quality care in a safe, efficient and caring environment.