

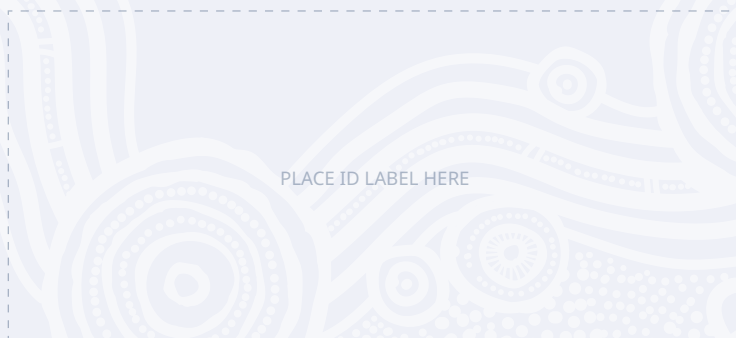


Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital

Discharge Guide

Surgical Wards

Everything you need to know when returning home



PLACE ID LABEL HERE

Guiding your journey from home to Hospital

- Discharge process explained
- Frequently asked questions
- Contact details, advice and much more

Name

Date

Please bring this booklet with you to all of your appointments

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This discharge guide has been designed to inform you, your family or carer of our hospital's discharge process.

This booklet has been developed with sections that allow you to write down your recovery instructions from your healthcare professionals.

We encourage you to read this booklet whilst staying on the hospital ward and to ask questions of your healthcare team.

The goals of this discharge guide are to help you do the following:

- **Have a conversation** with health professionals in the hospital, rather than just answering their questions.
- **Communicate** your most important needs and concerns.
- **Prepare mentally and emotionally** for your return home from hospital.

Hospital Discharge: Flow Chart

1 / DURING YOUR STAY ON THE WARD

Discharge Planning

- Planning will start early in the hospital stay
- Your healthcare team will identify your specific discharge needs

Patient and Family Education (if required or requested)

- Education on medical condition and your required ongoing care

Coordination of Services

- Scheduling your follow-up appointments
- Arranging home health services or equipment if required



2 / ON THE DAY YOU GO HOME

Final Medical Review

- Your surgical team will review your health status and ensure you are ready for discharge
- Completion of necessary documentation (e.g. medical certificate)

Discharge Instructions

- You will be visited by your treating teams (e.g. doctors, pharmacists) and provided with discharge instructions

Leaving the hospital

- You may be asked to wait in our discharge transit center while waiting for your transport to arrive or discharge medication if required.



3 / POST-DISCHARGE FOLLOW-UP CARE

- Attending follow-up appointments
- Adhering to prescribed medications and treatments
- Contacting healthcare provider if issues arise



What happens on the day I leave hospital?

Discharge time

We aim to discharge patients from our wards at 10am. However, this can be delayed at times due to the busy workload of our staff and depending on your individual needs. We kindly ask for your patience and understanding during this time.



Healthcare teams

Your surgical team will review your health status and ensure you are ready for discharge. You will be visited by your treating teams (e.g. doctors, pharmacists) and provided your discharge instructions and any necessary documentation (e.g. a medical certificate).

TIP: To keep track of any instructions given to you, write your notes on pages 7 - 11.

Future appointments

Our team will do their best to provide you with details of your appointments before you leave the hospital. When we are unable to do this, our team will contact you via phone and send a letter to update you of the planned appointments. If you have not heard from us within 1 week of leaving the hospital, please contact your clinic for advice.

TIP: You can write down your appointment details on page 6.

Transport

You will need to arrange your own transport to collect you from hospital by 10am on your discharge day (except in exceptional circumstances).

Please ask a relative or friend to collect you, or we can help you call a taxi. Hospital transport is available only for people who have a medical problem



that prevents them from using a car, taxi or public transport.

Medication

If you are given medication to take home or a discharge prescription, the pharmacist will explain the instructions to you. Medications you brought into hospital will be returned to

you providing it is safe and appropriate to do so. Please remind your nurse to return medications including those stored in the fridge or not stored at your bedside. After discharge if you require repeat prescriptions or have any medication queries you will need to contact your general practitioner.

TIP: If you are not given a Discharge Medication list you can request one from your hospital pharmacist.



Clothing

Please ensure you have your own clothes to travel home in.

Discharge Lounge

On the day of discharge, you may be transferred to the Discharge Transit Centre to wait for your support person to pick you up or for you discharge to be finalised (including supply of Discharge Medication list, discharge medications or prescription, final dose of intravenous antibiotics etc). The lounge has access to clinical staff including nurses and pharmacists who will ensure you can discharge safely and efficiently as well as facilities such as refreshments, newspapers and a television.

Location: Level 2, Ned Hanlon Building.

Discharge Summary

The General Practitioner (GP) you have nominated will be provided with a discharge summary outlining your hospital admission details. If you need to update your GP details, please speak to a staff member.

Preparing to leave hospital

When your healthcare team has let you know you can return home, it's important to consider the following questions and to discuss with your team:

Do I need a medical certificate?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, what type? (e.g. ordinary, Workcover QLD, Centrelink)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Hospital will contact me
Have I got my outpatient appointment details?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Do I have my discharge medication or prescription?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Have I collected the medication I brought with me including those stored in the fridge or not stored at hospital bedside?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Have I collected the x-rays/scans I brought with me?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Does my next of kin (NOK) or carer know I'm going home?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Do I need more education about looking after myself at home?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Has my intravenous canula (drip) been removed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Have my sutures or staples been removed? (If required)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	

Before you leave you should also make sure that:

- You have all your personal belongings
- You have signed all claim forms and any fees due are paid
- You have given us your correct forwarding address
- You have obtained relevant medical certificates from the doctor
- All items held for you have been collected
- You understand what medication you need to take
- You know about any follow up services you need



My Appointments

This page provides you with a space to write down your appointment details.

Appointment with:
(e.g. doctor, physio)

Date:

Time:

Location:

Appointment with:
(e.g. doctor, physio)

Date:

Time:

Location:

Appointment with:
(e.g. doctor, physio)

Date:

Time:

Location:

Appointment with:
(e.g. doctor, physio)

Date:

Time:

Location:

Appointment with:
(e.g. doctor, physio)

Date:

Time:

Location:

More information:

My Notes: Doctor



During your stay on the surgical ward, you will have many conversations with many different healthcare workers, and it can be hard to remember everything discussed. This page provides you with a space to write down important instructions and advice from your doctors.

Things to consider when speaking to your doctors:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical certificates | <input type="checkbox"/> Pain management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Returning to work, driving and exercise | <input type="checkbox"/> Symptoms needing attention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visiting my GP | <input type="checkbox"/> Recovery timeline |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wound care | <input type="checkbox"/> Limitations on walking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diet | <input type="checkbox"/> When can I shower? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical activity | |

If you have any questions you want to ask your doctors write them here:

Write down any important advice and instructions discussed here:

My Notes: Nursing Team

During your stay on the surgical ward, you will have many conversations with many different healthcare workers, and it can be hard to remember everything discussed. This page provides you with a space to write down important instructions and advice from your nurses.



Things to consider when speaking to your nurses:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Follow-up care | <input type="checkbox"/> Pain management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Recovery timeline |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Symptom monitoring | <input type="checkbox"/> Support services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wound care | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel arrangements |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Activity levels | <input type="checkbox"/> Contact information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caring for children or others | <input type="checkbox"/> What do I do if things go wrong at home |

If you have any questions you want to ask your nurses write them here:

Write down any important advice and instructions discussed here:

My Notes: Pharmacists



During your stay on the surgical ward, you will have many conversations with many different healthcare workers, and it can be hard to remember everything discussed. This page provides you with a space to write down important instructions and advice from your pharmacist not included in the Discharge medication list provided by your hospital pharmacist.

Things to consider when speaking to your doctors:

- What are my medicines used for
- Refilling script process
- How to access medicines and ongoing supply
- Common side effects
- How to store your medicines
- Allergies
- Activities or food to avoid while taking your medications
- Taking other medicines including over-the-counter medications

If you have any questions you want to ask your pharmacist write them here:

Write down any important advice and instructions discussed here:

My Notes: Physiotherapist



During your stay on the surgical ward, you will have many conversations with many different healthcare workers, and it can be hard to remember everything discussed. This page provides you with a space to write down important instructions and advice from your physiotherapist.

Things to consider when speaking to your physiotherapist:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home exercise plan | <input type="checkbox"/> Progress tracking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Activity guidelines | <input type="checkbox"/> Follow-up appointments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pain management | <input type="checkbox"/> Recovery timeline |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walking aids | |

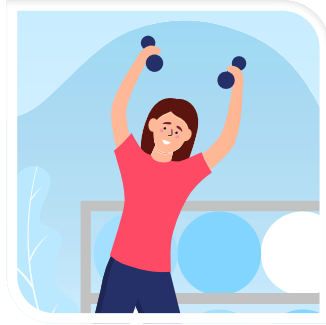
If you have any questions you want to ask your physiotherapist write them here:

Write down any important advice and instructions discussed here:

General advice for when you are home

Keeping active

It is important to keep active. Walking is a simple way to keep active and speed up your recovery. You may be given exercises to continue once you are home. You should aim to gradually increase your walking distance and time until you are walking approximately 20 – 30 minutes per day on most days of the week. Ask your doctor, nurse, or physiotherapist if you have any concerns about exercise at home.

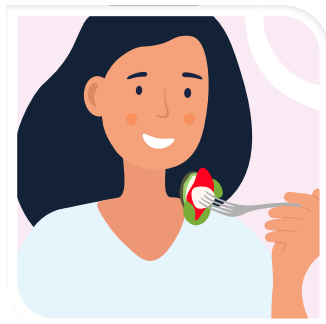


For more information about increasing your activity and exercise, go to:

- Health and wellbeing Queensland (<https://hw.qld.gov.au/>)
- Exercise Right (<https://exerciseright.com.au/essa-ebooks/>)

Eat healthy

Everyone should eat nutritious foods and keep active to maintain muscle strength. This is important both before and after surgery. Eating a wide variety of healthy foods to ensure your body gets all the nutrients it needs. It is important to drink plenty of water and avoid drinking too much alcohol (no more than 2 drinks daily. If you are underweight or losing weight without trying, check the tips below and consult a doctor if the problem persists.



- To increase protein and build your strength before and after surgery to help recovery, try the following:
 - Include protein foods as part of every meal and snack
 - Eat three (3) meals and three (3) nourishing snacks each day
 - If your appetite is poor, serve meals on a small plate and eat every 2-3 hours
 - Eat with family and friends or in

pleasant surroundings

- Keep ready-to-eat meals and snacks handy for times when you don't feel like preparing food
- If you are not hungry at mealtimes, try to have a nourishing milk drink or snack for example cheese and crackers. Not eating may make you feel sick in the stomach
- Avoid filling up on low calorie foods (e.g. tea, coffee, water, vegetable juices, diet drinks or clear soups)
- **Tips for preventing weight loss:** Your body uses protein for growth and repair of body tissues and muscles. Protein foods include:
 - meat, fish and chicken
 - soy products, legumes and nuts
 - high protein nutrition supplements
 - eggs and dairy products

More information can be found at the following website: www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines/australian-guide-healthy-eating (Australian Guide to Healthy Eating, Eat For Health)

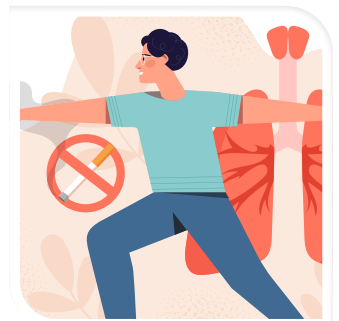
Avoid smoking after surgery

Smoking makes it harder for your body to recover, stressing your heart and lungs, and interferes with wound healing.

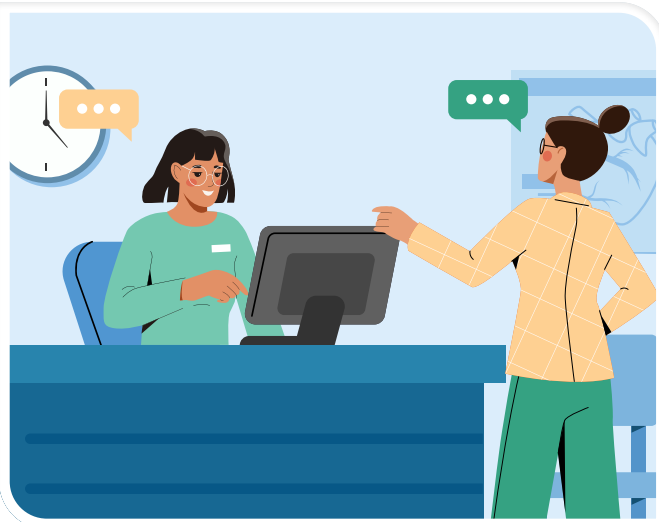
Nicotine replacement medications are available to help with cravings you may have. Stopping smoking will positively affect your post-surgery recovery:

- Decrease the risk of lung infections, wound infections and blood clotting
- Helps your body to heal wounds quicker and more effectively

Please speak with your general practitioner about the available options to support your decision to quit. There are medications available including nicotine patches, gums, lozenges and sprays. To ensure these medications work correctly for you, please seek advice from your general practitioner and phone the **QUITline 137848** for support.



Frequently Asked Questions



1. When will I be discharged from the hospital?

Answer: Your healthcare team will decide on your discharge date based on your recovery progress and medical condition. They will inform you in advance to allow you to make any necessary arrangements.

2. When can I expect to leave on my discharge day?

Answer: We aim to discharge patients from 10.00am in all wards. However, this can be delayed at times due to the busy workload of our staff and dependant on your individual needs. We ask that you please be patient with our busy staff during this time.

3. What medications should I take, and what medication schedule should I follow at home?

Answer: Your pharmacist will discuss all your medication requirements and provide a Discharge Medication list if required prior to you leaving the hospital. If you have any concerns on the ward, please ask to speak to your pharmacist. If you have any concerns after discharge, contact your general practitioner or discuss with your community pharmacist.

4. Do I have follow-up medical appointments, and when are those?

Answer: Your surgical team will organise a follow-up appointment (usually 4-6 weeks after surgery). Our team will do their best to provide

you with details of your appointments before you leave the hospital. When we are unable to do this, our team will contact you via phone and send a letter to update you of the planned appointments.

5. What happens if I need assistance, services or equipment at home?

Answer: You may require additional services, equipment or assistance with your recovery at home based on your needs. This will be organised with you during your stay on the ward.

6. What activities am I allowed to do or what activities should I avoid?

Answer: Your surgical team and physiotherapist will advise your recommended activity levels. If you have any concerns on the ward, please ask to speak to your surgical team or physiotherapist.

7. How do I obtain my medical records after discharge?

Answer: You have the right to apply for access to information held in your health records under the Administrative Access Scheme. To do this you will need to fill out the application form and follow the process as outlined on the RBWH internet site (<https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/about-us/information-access-privacy/accessing-health-records>)

8. What should I do if I feel unwell after being discharged?

Answer: If you experience any severe symptoms or have concerns about your health, contact your general practitioner immediately. For emergencies, call emergency services or visit the nearest emergency department.

9. What should I do if I don't feel ready to be discharged from the hospital?

Answer: If you have concerns that you are not ready to be discharged please speak to your doctors and nursing team. Whether your concerns are physical, mental or social in nature, we have healthcare workers that are here to support you including social workers.

What if I have concerns after my discharge?

If you feel unwell following your discharge, have severe pain or have any other concerns, you will need to contact a health professional to receive the help you need. This could be your local GP or your closest emergency department. If you have any of the below symptoms, contact the appropriate healthcare professional.

URGENT CONCERNS

CALL 000 OR GO TO YOUR LOCAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

- Uncontrollable bleeding
- Chest pain or tightness of the chest
- An altered level of your consciousness/difficulty staying awake
- Seizures/fits/collapse or fall
- Sudden onset of weakness or paralysis of the limbs or face
- Difficulty in breathing



CONCERNS REQUIRING REVIEW

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL GP

- Redness around your wound site
- Increasing pain not controlled by pain relief medication
- Increasing swelling around the surgical area
- Your wound opens up or stitches break
- You have a fever
- Any concerns that you, your family or friends may have



GENERAL ENQUIRIES

CALL 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84)

13 HEALTH is a confidential phone service that provides health advice to Queenslanders. You can phone and talk to a registered nurse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for the cost of a local call. This is not a diagnostic service and should not replace medical consultation. In an emergency always dial **000**.

Registered nurses provide health-related advice over the phone for health information and assessment of symptoms. This includes a comprehensive telephone assessment resulting in a recommendation of a time and place of care.



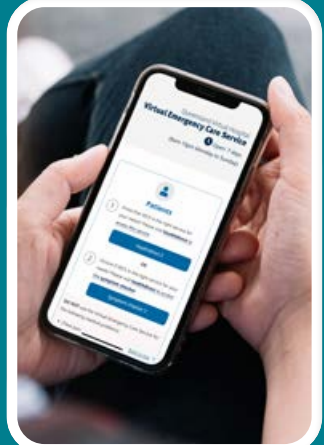
Support Services



RBWH Switchboard phone **(07) 3646 8111** - *we are here for you*. Our helpful switchboard operators will be able to forward your call to the appropriate staff members to assist with any of your enquiries.

VIRTUAL EMERGENCY CARE SERVICE

Virtual Emergency Care Service offers patients a symptom checker and alternative pathways that can help avoid waiting in an Emergency Department. Visit www.metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/hospitals-services/qvh-virtual-emergency-care-service.



HEALTHDIRECT AUSTRALIA

The healthdirect service will help you find the right health information for your symptoms and provide advice on what to do next. This government-owned service aims to help you make informed decisions about your health using online tools including a risk checker, symptom checker and question builder. Visit www.healthdirect.gov.au or download the healthdirect app.



POST-OPERATIVE DISCHARGE SUPPORT SERVICE

Our Post-Operative Discharge Support Service is a phone service supporting **Urology, Plastics, Orthopaedic** (elective lower limb surgery) and **General Surgery** patients experiencing complications or have any questions related to their surgery after leaving the hospital. If you experience any complications related to your surgery up to 30 days post discharge, please call the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital PODSS Nurse on: **0428 203 741**.

Hours of service are 8.00am – 3.30pm Monday – Friday (excluding public holidays).

