

It is important that you shower regularly as this helps prevent wound infection by keeping skin bacteria levels down. You will be asked to do this on day 2 after your operation and you should continue to do this at least every other day.

If the skin around the wound(s) becomes red, hot or swollen please seek advice from your GP and/or the tissue viability nurse. If the wound(s) start to produce any fluid or open up please attend the Emergency Department and/or contact the tissue viability nurse.

Going Home

The chest wall team will discuss when you are able to return to normal activities and sport. The following is a guide:

Activity	When
Walking/static exercise bike	Immediately
Raising arms above shoulders	3 weeks
Lying on side	6 weeks
Return to school/college/work	6 weeks
Twisting of spine	3 months
Pushing up from chair with arms	3 months
Pushing/pulling/lifting heavy objects or bags	3 months
Gentle exercise (e.g. jogging, cycling, swimming)	3 months
Contact/competitive sport (e.g. football, rugby, tennis)	6 months

Please contact the Chest Wall Team if you have any general queries or concerns.

Please notify us of any injury that may have impact on the bars.

Contact Details

Surgical Secretaries: 0141 451 6594

Physiotherapy: 0141 452 4650

Pain Team: 0141 452 4304

Tissue Viability Nurse: 0141 452 5786

If you start to feel unwell, have any difficulty with your breathing, significant discomfort or have any problems with your wounds please attend the Emergency Department at the Royal Hospital for Children.

Physiotherapy department,
Royal Hospital for Children,
1345 Govan Road,
Glasgow,
G51 4TF,
Tel: 0141 452 4650



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Patient information

Recovery advice following Pectus Surgery



Please use this leaflet along with the Physiotherapy Advice Following Surgery and your Pectus Surgery Recovery Pathway. It is important that you follow this advice to help you get better quickly and prevent any problems after your surgery.

Precautions

It is possible for your bars to move therefore you must follow certain precautions:

- No forward or side bending at the chest
- No twisting
- No rolling
- No lying on your side
- Do not raise arms above shoulder height.

Pain control

The Pain Team will review you daily during your hospital stay to ensure good pain management. You will go home with pain medication and you will need this medicine for 6-8 weeks after surgery and should not stop taking it without discussing it with the specialist pain management nurses. They will keep in touch with you by phone and will see you when you attend clinic appointments.

You may only get a 2 week supply of these medicines so you will have to arrange another prescription from your GP.

Supported cough

Your physiotherapist will teach you how to cough by supporting your chest wall

with a pillow or a towel. This is important if you have mucus to clear and is also useful when sneezing or laughing.

Breathe deeply

To encourage good airflow through your lungs and prevent any chest infections after surgery it is important to take deep breaths. This will also encourage movement of your newly shaped ribcage. We understand this may be uncomfortable but it is very important to get your lungs working properly.

Your physiotherapist will give you an Incentive Spirometer, and before your surgery they will show you how to use this.

- Sit upright in bed or a chair – do not slouch!
- Take a long, steady breath in through the mouthpiece
- Keep the small round yellow counter in the smiley face whilst raising the large yellow marker as high up the cylinder as possible
- Blow out all the air in your chest before taking the next breath in

Be active

It is important that you sit up out of bed with help either on the day of your surgery of the following day after the first day after surgery because spending too much time in bed can cause mucus to build up in your lungs putting you at risk of a chest infection. Your physiotherapist will help you to get up out of bed for the first time.

You will start to walk on Day 1 after surgery. This will feel easier every day and you will soon be able to walk on your own. Your physiotherapist will work with you to ensure you feel safe, confident and ready to go home.

Keep upright

It may be uncomfortable to sit and stand up straight following your surgery but sitting or standing hunched might make you worse and make it difficult to keep your lungs clear of mucus. Poor posture may also affect the appearance of your chest following surgery. Your physiotherapist will give you advice and exercises to help improve your posture.

Skin care

During the first few days after surgery, you are at risk of getting pressure ulcers on your heels and bottom. A pressure ulcer is an area of skin damage caused by sitting or lying in one position for too long. It is important to check the skin on your heels and bottom twice a day for any red or bruised looking areas. If you notice any areas like this, please tell the nurse looking after you.

Wound care

After your surgery you will have dressings over your wounds, these have to stay on until you go home from hospital. Nurses will change the dressings every 2-3 days. Please do not take off the dressings or rub them. If you are itchy, tell the nurse looking after you.