

Enhanced recovery after kidney transplant surgery

Dear Patient

We write to you as a patient on the Edinburgh renal transplant waiting list.

In the Edinburgh Transplant Centre, we are always looking to improve your outcomes and experience. In order to progress your recovery post transplant and facilitate a safe and timely discharge, we adopt examples of global best practice. Both before and after your operation, there will be an enhanced focus on ensuring good pain relief, improving good nutrition and increasing activity. This approach is commonly known as **ERAS** (Enhanced Recovery After Surgery) with lots of research to support its benefit to patients.

Our aim is to discharge you home four days after your operation if **safe** to do so.

The specialist, transplant Physiotherapy team want to help you prepare for your potential renal transplant surgery by maximising your health before the operation and improving recovery afterwards.

Recovering from a renal transplant can require extra motivational effort. This letter provides you with information on what to expect and what is expected of you after the operation including breathing exercises and chest clearance techniques and ways to keep active after your surgery with exercise targets. The activities are safe and suitable for post-operative patients and nursing staff will be there to support you.

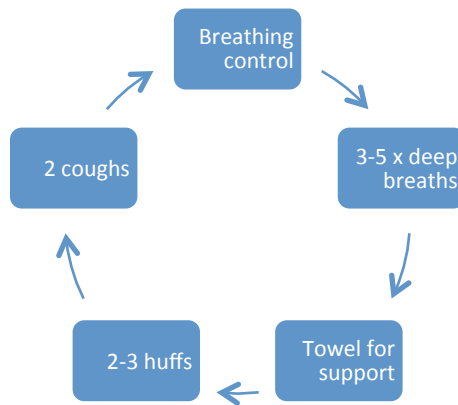
Please take the time to read over this letter before surgery and keep it as a reference after the operation.

On the waiting list

The time on the waiting list before surgery is an ideal opportunity to prepare yourself physically. Activity and fitness are important factors, which can enhance recovery after surgery. The exercise you choose will be dependent on your level of fitness but could include walking, swimming, cycling or even just climbing stairs, and ideally something you enjoy. The aim is to slowly build up your activity levels, to a level where you feel mildly short of breath, and to pace yourself.

After surgery

After surgery breathing exercises are very important. These are designed to help your lungs expand after the operation, and to enable you to clear any secretions as required. It can be useful to practice these before the operation as well. These are all best completed in an upright position and may be started as soon as you are awake after surgery.



- **Breathing control** – this is normal relaxed breathing at your own pace. It can help to place your hands on your tummy to feel it rise and fall.
- **Deep breathing** – Breathe in slowly and as deeply as you can comfortably for 3-5 breaths. Hold each breath in for 2-3 seconds, and then exhale slowly
- **Huffing** – this is a short sharp breath used to help you to cough and clear phlegm more easily. To do this take a medium breath in, make an “O” shape with your mouth and huff out as if you are steaming up a mirror or your glasses. Try this two times.
- **Cough** – Try a cough to clear any phlegm that may be there.

After the operation you may find some discomfort when completing these breathing exercises. It is helpful to use a rolled up towel (like a pad) against your wound to support when you huff or cough. It is safe to do so and is not harmful to the healing of your wound. In addition, it is beneficial to do circulatory exercises post surgery. This can be as simple as moving your toes and ankles regularly.

On day 1 and 2 after your transplant, you should aim to continue your exercises and be up out of bed and walking with assistance of the nursing staff. A physiotherapist will review your mobility on day 3 to progress towards discharge on day 4, providing walking aids, assessment on stairs (if applicable) and post-op discharge advice and exercises as required. Should you require our physiotherapy service earlier, the nursing staff looking after you can contact us. If you have any respiratory conditions or pre-existing difficulties with your mobility or if you are unable to get up out of bed on the first day after your transplant or if you need oxygen after surgery, a member of our Physiotherapy team will review you on day 1 or 2 after your surgery.

Before you are discharged home after your surgery, we will provide you with a feedback questionnaire. We would greatly appreciate any feedback on this letter.

If you have any further questions or concerns, a member of the Physiotherapy team will be happy to speak to you. We can be contacted via the Transplant Co-ordinators.

Yours Sincerely,

Physio team and Edinburgh Transplant Unit