

The ROYAL MARSDEN

NHS Foundation Trust

# GEARS: Your post surgery recovery programme

*Neck Dissection / Total Thyroidectomy /  
Parotidectomy patient checklist*



NHS

Name

Date of surgery

We understand that undertaking cancer surgery might be a stressful period. To alleviate some of the stress on your mind and body, we recommend following the GEARS programme.

GEARS stands for:



**G**et up

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**E**at

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**A**nalgesia

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**R**emove

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**S**peak up






# Day before your surgery

Task	Completed
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Remain active throughout the day</li><li>- Exercise at least once today to raise your heart rate</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Maintain your normal diet; no food after midnight</li><li>- Only drink water after midnight</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Continue regular medications as directed by your pre-assessment nurse</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Shower thoroughly as instructed by your pre-assessment nurse</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Call to check your arrival time and details</li><li>- Planning details for your discharge to avoid delays</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>






# Morning of surgery

Task	Completed
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Remain active until your surgery</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- No food after midnight</li><li>- Only drink water until 6am; nothing after 6am</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Continue regular medications as directed by your pre-assessment</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Have a shower before coming to hospital</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Ask any questions you have before your surgery</li><li>- Plan details for your discharge to avoid delays</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>






# Immediately after your surgery

Task	Completed
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Deep breathing exercises throughout the day</li><li>- Get out of bed into chair with assistance of nurse if possible</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Drink sips of water; progress to clear fluids if tolerating</li><li>- Gradually introduce food and drink as tolerated</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- You will be started on oral analgesia when you are awake after your operation</li><li>- Make your team aware if you are in pain</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- No actions required today</li></ul>	
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Raise any questions or concerns to your team</li><li>- Plan details for your discharge to avoid delays</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

# Day 1 after your surgery






Task	Completed
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Deep breathing throughout the day</li><li>- Sit out of bed at least twice, but preferably most of the day</li><li>- Walk and mobilise freely</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Eat and drink normally as tolerated</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Pain team will review you if required</li><li>- Your team will optimise your oral pain relief, and may consider adding anti-inflammatory painkillers (NSAIDs) if you are tolerating food</li><li>- Total thyroidectomy patients will be started on replacement levothyroxine today by their team</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Your team will remove your drain if output is &lt;30ml/24 hours</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Raise any questions or concerns to your team</li><li>- Continue planning your discharge (refer to SAFER discharge checklist on page 10)</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

## Day 2 after your surgery

Task	Completed
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Mobilise freely</li><li>- Stay out of bed for most of the day</li><li>- Wear your own clothes</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Eat and drink normally as tolerated</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Make your team aware if you are in pain</li><li>- Your team will ensure your discharge medications are ready</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Your team will remove any remaining drains if output is &lt;30ml/24 hours</li><li>- Your team will remove your intravenous cannula once all of your drains have been safely removed</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Raise any questions or concerns to your team</li><li>- Learn how to care for your wounds</li><li>- Your team may consider discharge today if SAFER discharge checklist achieved (see page 10)</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>



## Day 3 after your surgery

Task	Completed
 – Dress and mobilise freely in preparation for your discharge	<input type="checkbox"/>
 – Eat normally	<input type="checkbox"/>
 – You will have all of your medications explained to you before discharge	<input type="checkbox"/>
 – Your team will remove all cannulas	<input type="checkbox"/>
 – Raise any questions or concerns to your team	<input type="checkbox"/>
– Discharge home – SAFER discharge checklist achieved (see page 10)	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Frequently asked questions

## **When can I start driving?**

You can drive as soon as you are off strong painkillers and can confidently perform an emergency stop, if in doubt please contact your insurer.

## **When is my next appointment?**

Your discharge summary will include information on follow up appointments, duration of discharge medication and who to contact if you have questions.

# SAFER Clinical Criteria for Discharge (CCD)

1. Mobilising freely; eating and drinking adequately
2. Pain well controlled with oral analgesia
3. Independent with care for wounds and dressings, or District Nurse arranged
4. All lines/drains removed; or plan for removal as outpatient
5. All concerns addressed, contact details given, follow up arranged.

# Basic wound care

- Keep wounds clean and dry
- Cleanse in the shower
- Gently dry with a clean towel
- Avoid using soap on the wound
- Unless oozing or rubbing on clothing keep wounds exposed to allow them to heal.

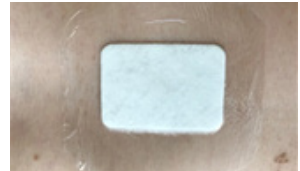
You may have skin clips or stitches. These are usually taken out between 10-14 days after surgery. Your team will give you detailed instructions and will make sure you know where to go to get this done before you leave hospital. This is sometimes done at your local GP practice.



Surgical skin clips



Removable stitches



Tegaderm dressing

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This booklet is evidence based wherever the appropriate evidence is available, and represents an accumulation of expert opinion and professional interpretation.

Details of the references used in writing this booklet are available on request from: The Royal Marsden Help Centre  
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The information in this booklet is correct at the time of going to print.



## Contact details

It is **very important** that if you have any concerns or problems after leaving hospital, you contact someone as soon as possible.

Your key worker:

### The Royal Marsden Macmillan Hotline

020 8915 6899 (available 24 hours a day, seven days a week)

## Other useful sources of patient information:

### Macmillan Cancer Support

[www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

0808 808 0000 (free phone)

Macmillan provides information and support on cancer from diagnosis to treatment and beyond. A wide range of resources are also offered.

### Cancer Research UK

[www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org)

CRUK has a patient information website, with information on all types of cancer and treatment choices.



Radiation and  
Chemotherapy Services  
Preston & Poulton