Royal United Hospitals Bath
NHS Foundation Trust

Prehabilitation and Enhanced Recovery (PER) for Gynaecological Surgery

Introduction

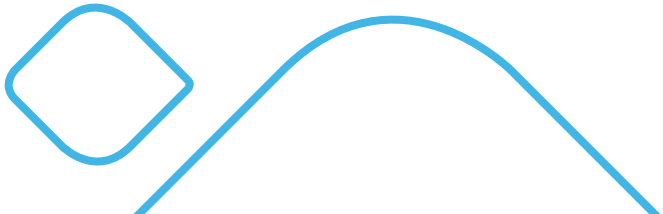
Prehabilitation is a proactive and personalised programme designed to improve your functional capacity before surgery or treatment. Enhanced Recovery Programme is a modern approach that helps you recover as quickly and safely as possible after surgery. Prehabilitation and Enhanced Recovery (PER) includes best practices before and after your operation – often comprising exercise, nutrition and psychological support, to support faster healing, fewer complications, and an earlier return to normal life.

Recent research conducted in our department at the RUH showed that good adherence to PER resulted in a 20% decrease in length of hospital stay, together with reduction in occurrence of complications and readmissions.

PER enhances your recovery by:

- Helping your bowels return to normal.
- Helping you to get back on your feet and move around.
- Helping to maintain muscle strength and cardio-respiratory fitness.
- Helping to manage pain, swelling and reducing fatigue.

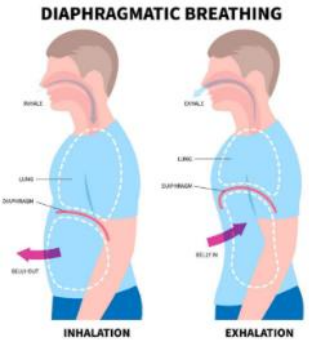
PER also reduces the risk of complications such as chest infections, urinary tract infections, blood clots formation in your legs – deep vein thrombosis (DVT), muscle wasting and constipation. We will encourage you to work towards achieving daily goals. The more involved you are, the more successful the programme will be for you.



Before Your Surgery (Prehabilitation)

To prepare your body and mind:

- **Exercise**: Aim for 20–30 minutes of moderate intensity activity daily (e.g., brisk walking, static cycling, swimming). You need to feel slightly shortness of breath or sweating to achieve moderate intensity to maximise the efficacy of exercise. You can also carry out some strength exercises following the instructions of your physiotherapist.
- **Nutrition**: Eat a balanced diet consists of fresh veggies/fruit, high fibre carbs and quality proteins. Consider a conversation with your dietitian/CNS for nutrient rich supplements if you experience recent weight loss or reduced appetite.
- **Smoking & Alcohol**: Please consider stop smoking and reduce alcohol intake at least 4 weeks before surgery. You could find information to help stop smoking here: (https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/)
- **Pelvic Floor Exercises**: Carry out at least 3 cycles of pelvic floor exercises daily.
- **Breathing & Leg Exercises:** Take slow, gentle deep breaths down into the bottom of your lungs – as if you are blowing up a balloon in your belly. Have a big cough after each cycle of 10 deep breaths. Slowly wiggle your ankles and bend your knees 10-20 times when you are in bed. You are supposed to carry out both exercises hourly after your surgery.



For information on lifestyle changes that can make a difference in the time you have before treatment, please visit 'SWAG Prehab' cancer alliance website or use the QR code below:

https://swagcanceralliance.nhs.uk/prehab-home/

You can find our web pages on the Royal United Hospital NHS Trust website by searching 'Cancer Rehab Team' or at: www.ruh.nhs.uk/CancerRehab. You can also use the QR code below to link directly to the webpage:

https://www.ruh.nhs.uk/CancerRehab

On the Day of Surgery

- During the preoperative appointment, your doctor will inform you if you are not allowed eating/drinking before your surgery during the preoperative appointment.
- You may be allowed to drink carbohydrate-rich clear fluids up to 2 hours before surgery.
- Bring supportive shoes or slippers and loose clothing.

You will be encouraged to start moving shortly after surgery.

After Surgery: Early Mobilisation

Movement helps reduce risks and aids healing. Your goals include:

Day 0 (Same Day as Surgery)

- Sit up in bed or on a chair **under supervision of a nursing staff**.
- Perform breathing and leg exercises **every hour** while awake.
- Walk a short distance with support if possible.

Day 1 and Onwards

- Sit out of bed for all meals.
- Walk short distances several times a day (5–10 minutes, 4–6 times daily).
- Continue deep breathing and leg exercises.
- Increase walking distance gradually as tolerated.

Physiotherapy Advice

- Avoid sudden twisting of your body and slow down when you try to grab/push.
- Avoid heavy lifting (over 1–2 kg //2.2-4.4 lbs) for 6 weeks.
- Avoid high-impact activities (such as jumping, high knees, running) until cleared by your medical team.

Please use the QR code below to access a more detailed advice and pelvic floor exercise booklet for self-management following your gynaecological surgery:

http://thepogp.co.uk/_userfiles/pages/files/211984pogpffsurgery.pdf

Returning to Normal Activities

Weeks 2–4

- Continue gentle but often walking and light household tasks.
- Resume low-impact activities (e.g., light yoga, static cycling).

Weeks 4–6

- Increase walking distance and pace.
- Consider swimming or gentle exercise classes if wound healing goes well.

After 6 Weeks

- Resume normal activities and exercise routines gradually.
- Listen to your body; stop if you feel discomfort.

When to Contact the Team. Contact your hospital or GP if you experience:

- Increased pain, redness, or swelling around your wound.
- Fever or chills.
- Difficulty passing urine or bowel movements.
- Shortness of breath or chest pain.

Please complete our Prehab feedback form by scanning the QR code below after 6 weeks of your surgery/treatment to help us evaluate our service:

Please contact the Cancer Rehab team on: ***ruh-tr.cancerrehab@nhs.net*** or Tel *01225821241* if you have any questions or concerns in completing these exercises.

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If you would like this leaflet in email form, large print, braille or another language, please contact the Patient Support and Complaints team on 01225 825656.

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