

HELP US TO HELP YOU GET FIT FOR YOUR OPERATION SUPPORT TO LOSE WEIGHT

HELP US TO HELP YOU... GET FIT FOR YOUR OPERATION

We know that the way we live our lives can affect our long-term health. Being significantly overweight can cause serious, potentially life-threatening conditions and affect your quality of life.

You may feel great, but if you're overweight and need routine surgery, you could be at greater risk of complications during or after your operation. Your recovery can be seriously delayed too.

That's why people in Hertfordshire who have a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 or more and need routine, non-urgent operations under general, spinal or epidural anaesthetic are required to lose weight before their operation takes place.

The good news is that there is lots of free support in Hertfordshire to help you to lose weight and get as fit as possible before your operation.

HELP US TO HELP YOU... IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH

Being overweight increases the possibility of developing these complications during or after your operation:

- starving your heart of oxygen
- blood clots forming in your veins, blocking the blood vessels to your lungs
- finding it harder to breathe during and after surgery
- increasing your risk of chest and other infections
- poorer healing of your bones, muscles, skin and wounds
- changing the breakdown of certain drugs in your body
- slowing your recovery time after a general anaesthetic
- increasing the time you need to stay in hospital.

DID YOU KNOW?

It is more difficult to give anaesthetic to patients who are overweight

GOOD NEWS

If you carry less weight, your body will be better prepared to recover faster from surgery

HELP US TO HELP YOU... RECOVER FROM YOUR OP

You can reduce your risk of complications and there are many benefits to losing weight before surgery. It can make it easier and safer to perform your operation if you carry less weight.

If you take steps to improve your health and lose weight, you are likely to have:

- a faster recovery
- better wound healing
- a shorter stay in hospital
- less need for intensive care
- less need for further surgery
- less chance of developing cancer or diabetes
- a longer, healthier life.

HELP US TO HELP YOU... LOSE WEIGHT

Your GP will discuss your personal weight goal and write it on this leaflet for your information. Then, with your permission, your GP can refer you to free weight loss and/or supported exercise services, where you can get help to achieve your target weight. It's easier to stick with a weight loss plan when you have the encouragement and support of others.

There are lots of different support programmes you can join, from slimming clubs and exercise classes at local leisure centres, to health walks and men-only groups run by local football teams.

If you want to lose weight without the support of a group, we recommend that you visit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/healthyweight or www.nhs.uk/livewell for NHS approved information, apps, guides and useful links to help you reach your goal.

DID YOU KNOW?

It's easier to stick with a weight loss plan when you have support

QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

How much weight do I need to lose before my non-urgent operation?

It's important that you lose enough weight to reduce the risk of problems developing both during and after your operation.

If your BMI is between 30 and 40, you will need to either:

- lose at least 10% of your body weight, or
- reduce your weight until your BMI is less than 30.

If your BMI is over 40, you will need to either:

- lose at least 15% of your body weight, or
- reduce your weight until your BMI is less than 40 – whichever is the greater amount.

Visit www.nhs.uk/BMI if you want to calculate your own BMI.

My current weight is:

My body mass index (BMI) is:

My target weight is:

How quickly do I need to lose weight?

We recommend that you use the advice and help available to try to achieve your target weight loss slowly and steadily.

It's important to remember that you need to maintain your new healthier weight right up to the day of your operation and beyond, so that your risk of complications is reduced.

Your GP should review your progress 9 months after your target weight has been agreed. If you lose weight more quickly than this, contact your GP to let them know.

My review date is:

What if my condition changes during the 9 month period?

If you feel that there is a change in your health or wellbeing which means that your need for an operation has become more urgent, make an appointment with your GP. Your GP can review the urgency of your situation and your need for surgery with you.

What happens if I don't manage to lose weight?

After 9 months, if you haven't managed to achieve your target weight, you should make a follow-up appointment with your GP practice to talk about your health and your need for surgery.

Your GP will make sure that you're getting all the help that you need and will discuss with specialists whether it is safe for you to have an operation despite not reaching your target weight.

Can my doctor refer me for tests or a consultant's opinion before I have started my weight loss?

Depending on your health problem, your GP can refer you for tests or to see a specialist before you have lost weight.

If the tests reveal you need a non-urgent routine operation, the hospital will write to inform your doctor. Your GP will then help to get you the support you need to achieve your target weight before your operation.

Are exceptions ever made to the healthier weight policy?

Yes, exceptions are made when:

- patients need urgent or emergency surgery
- patients need surgery for cancer, or suspected cancer
- patients have surgery under local anaesthetic
- patients need heart surgery, cardiothoracic surgery, neurosurgery or fracture procedures
- a doctor considers that the risk to a patient of waiting for an operation outweighs the benefits of losing weight
- a patient has a BMI of 30-40, is not having hip, knee or spinal surgery and does not have 'metabolic syndrome'.

For a definition of what metabolic syndrome is, please refer to the *Fitness for Elective Surgery* policy on your CCG website.

The policy only applies to those aged 18 and over.

DID YOU KNOW?

There is free support available in Hertfordshire to help you lose weight

Where do I go if I have any concerns or queries?

If you have any questions about the support available to help you to lose weight, please ask at your GP practice or visit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/healthinherts

You can also contact your CCG using the details on the back page of this leaflet.

FURTHER SUPPORT

For more information and advice about keeping healthy and well in Hertfordshire, please visit: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/healthinherts or call HertsHelp on 0300 123 4044.

The policy outlined in this booklet was agreed after a public consultation, carried out by East and North Hertfordshire CCG and Herts Valleys CCG in 2017.

CONTACT US

East and North Hertfordshire CCG

Phone: 01707 685000

Email: enhertsccg.enquiries@nhs.net

Write to: Quality Team, East and North Hertfordshire CCG, Charter House, Parkway, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 6JL

Website: www.enhertsccg.nhs.uk/FitForSurgery

Herts Valleys CCG

Phone: 01442 898888

Email: enquiries.hvccg@nhs.net

Write to: Quality Team, Herts Valleys CCG, The Forum, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP1 1DN

Website: www.hertsvalleysccg.nhs.uk/FitForSurgery

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