

Having surgery

Diagnosis and Treatment



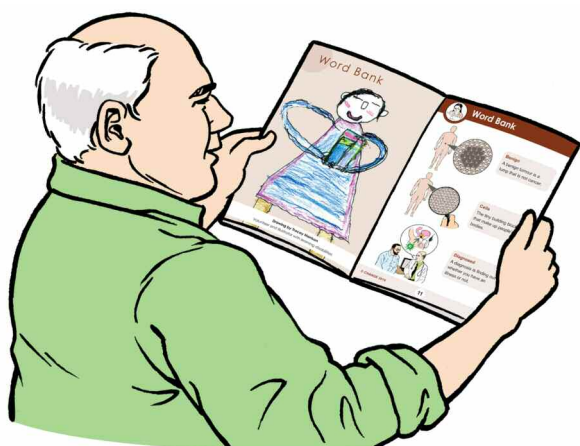
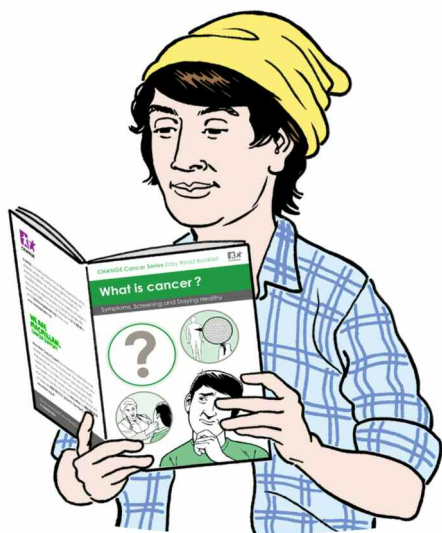
Introduction

This booklet uses easy words and pictures to help you get information about cancer.

You might want someone to help you look at the booklet so you can talk about it.

There is a Word Bank at the back of the booklet to help with hard words. Any words in **bold** you can find in the Word Bank.

This booklet can help you learn about cancer. But this is not the same as talking to your doctor. If you are worried about your health, you should talk to a doctor or nurse.



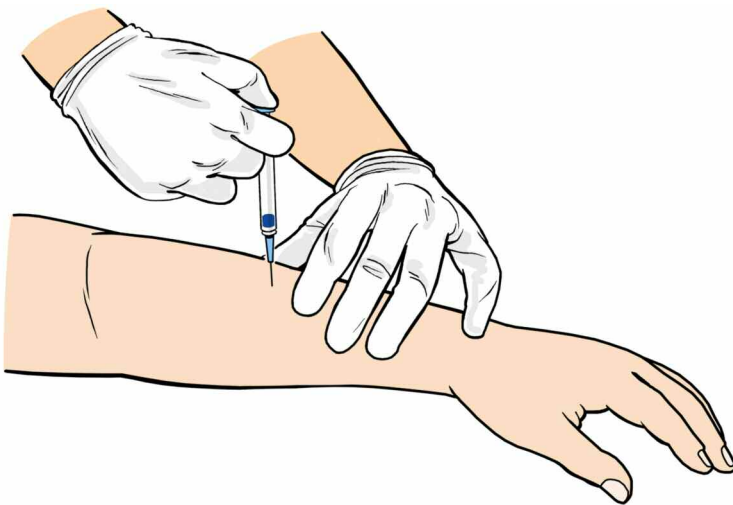


Having surgery

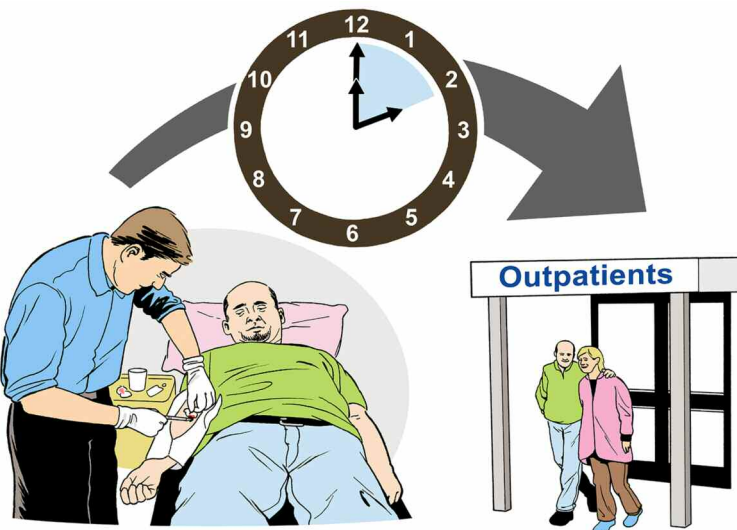
Having minor surgery



Minor **surgery** means having a small **operation**. For minor surgery the doctor does not need you to be asleep.



The doctor will put some medicine on your skin so that you do not feel anything.

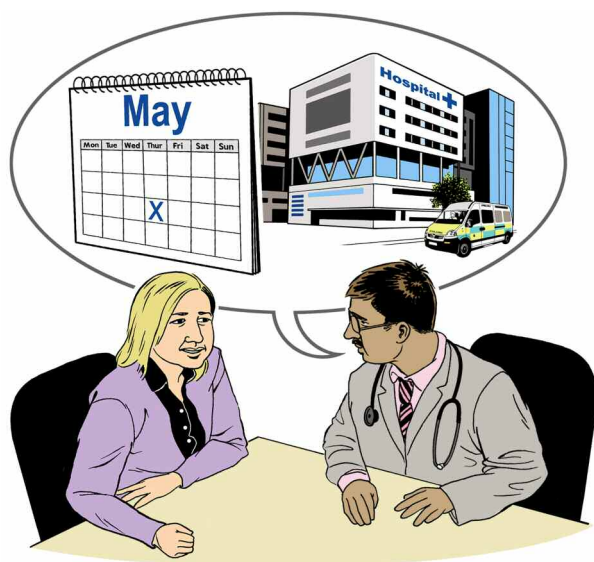


You can usually go home a few hours after the operation.

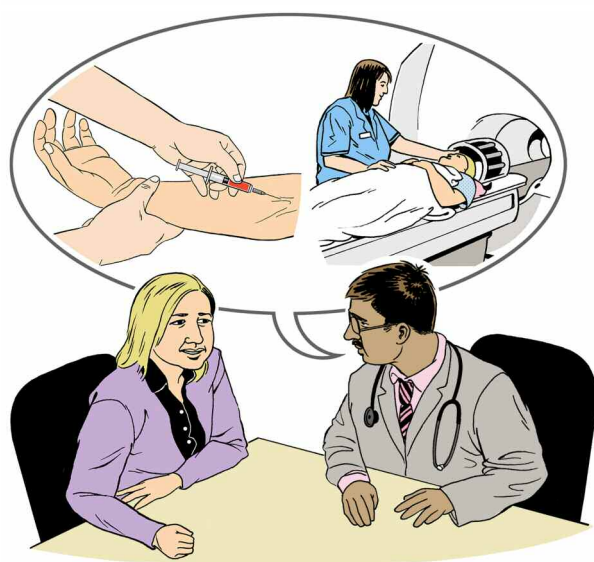


Having surgery

Having major surgery



Major surgery means having a bigger operation. Before major surgery, your doctor may arrange a few more tests. This is to make sure it is OK for you to have surgery.



These tests may include blood tests, scans, x-rays or other tests.



The doctor will also ask you about any medicines you are taking, for example for **asthma** or **diabetes**. The doctor will tell you if you need to change the way you take your medicines before surgery.



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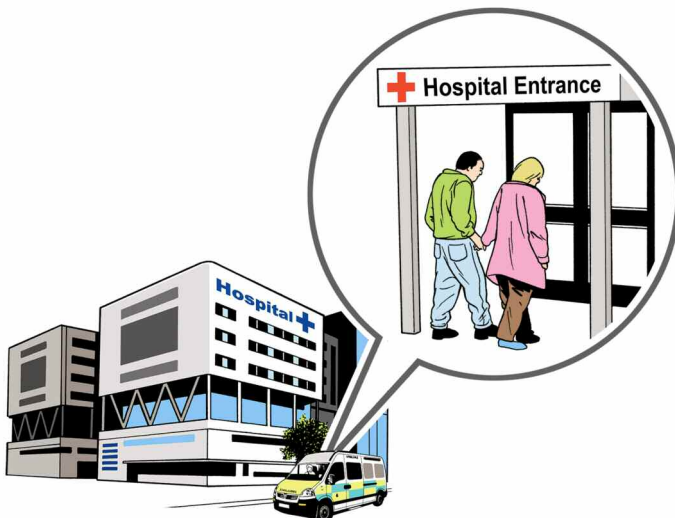
Before major surgery



Usually you can't eat or drink anything for a few hours before having surgery.



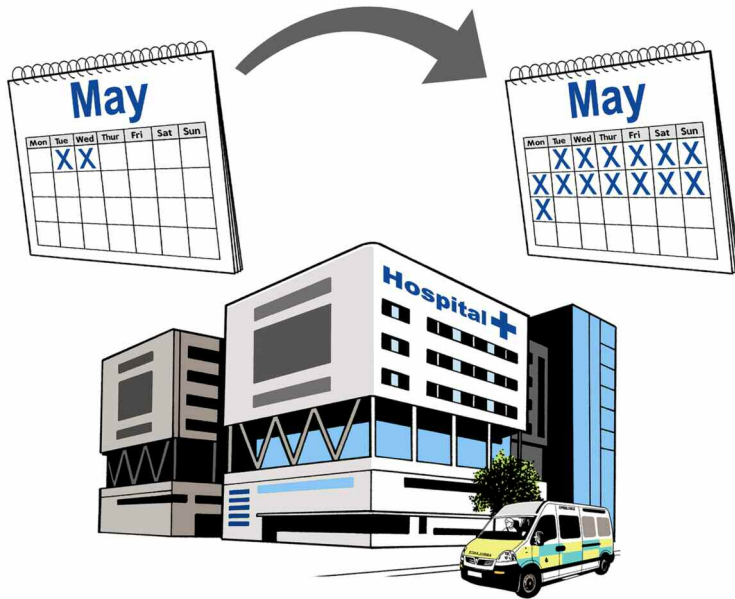
Make sure you, or your supporter, asks the doctor what time you have to stop eating and drinking.



When you go for surgery you will need someone to come with you. They can support you and stay for as long as you need them.



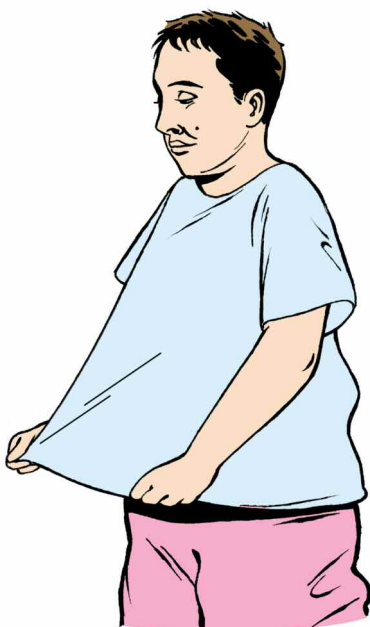
Having surgery



For major surgery you will have to stay in hospital for at least a few days. Sometimes it can be a week or two.



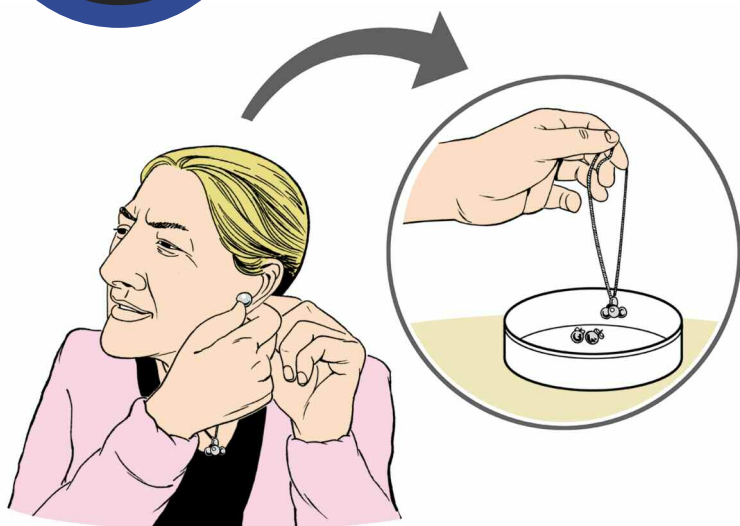
When you know how long you need to be in hospital you can pack a bag with anything you need. For example, your toothbrush, washing things, nightwear and some clothes.



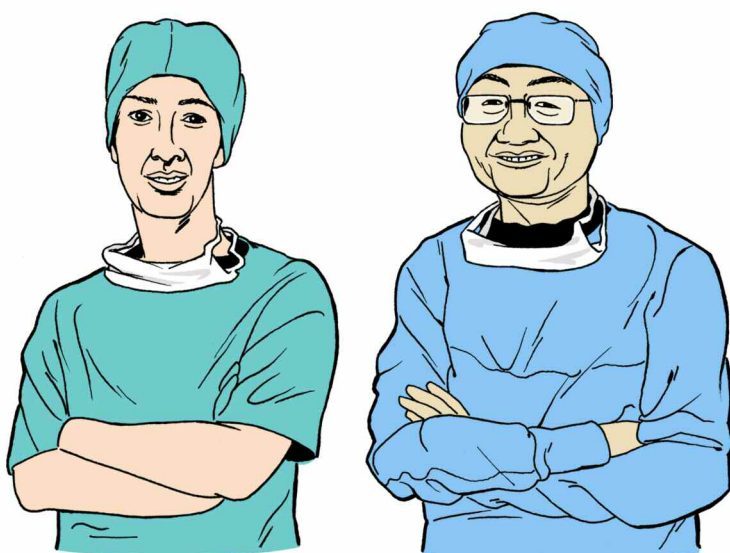
When you come to the hospital you should wear loose comfy clothing.



Having surgery



You should leave any jewellery at home where it will be safe. You will not be able to wear it during the operation.



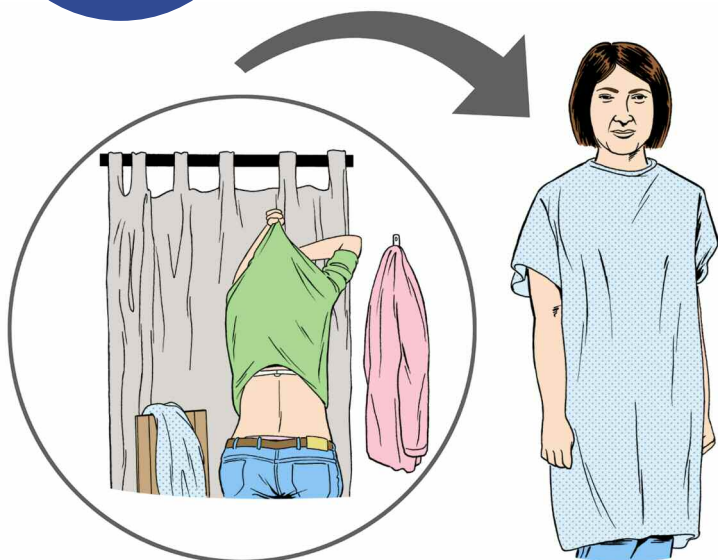
A doctor called a **surgeon** will do the operation. There will also be other health professionals looking after you during the operation and after it.



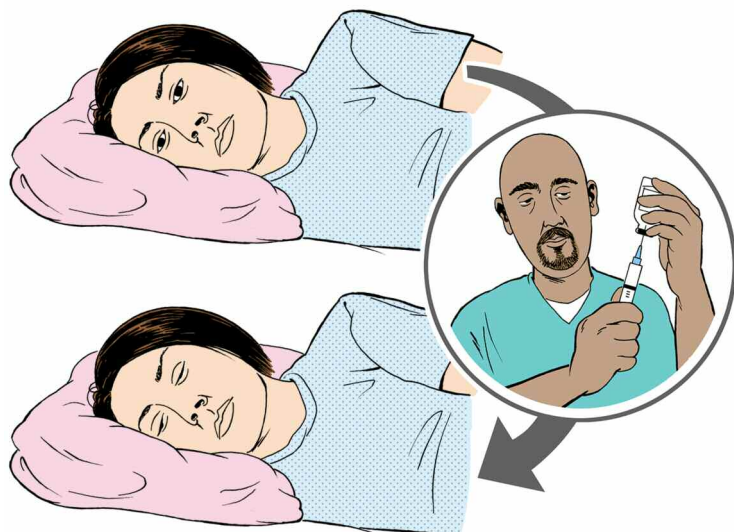
Your supporter may be able to come into the operating room if you need them to.



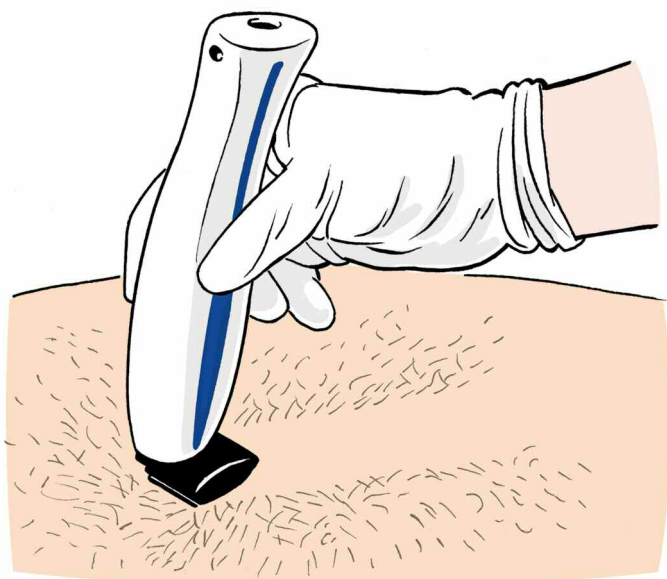
Having surgery



Before the operation, you may need to take off your clothes and put on a hospital gown.



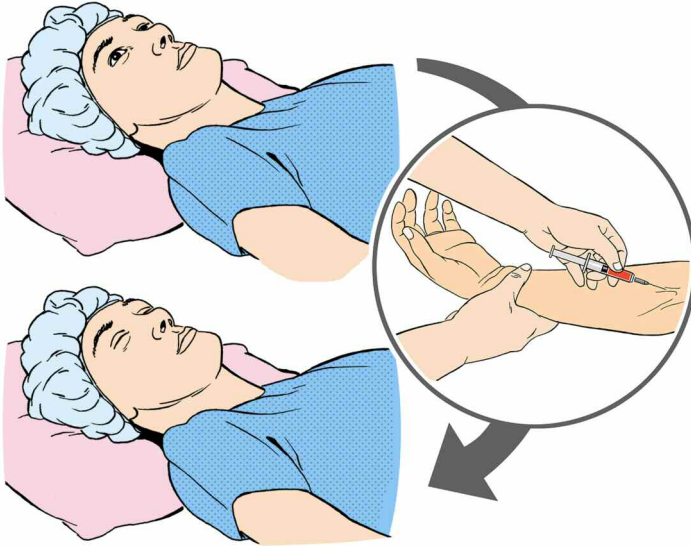
You will be given some medicine to help you relax.



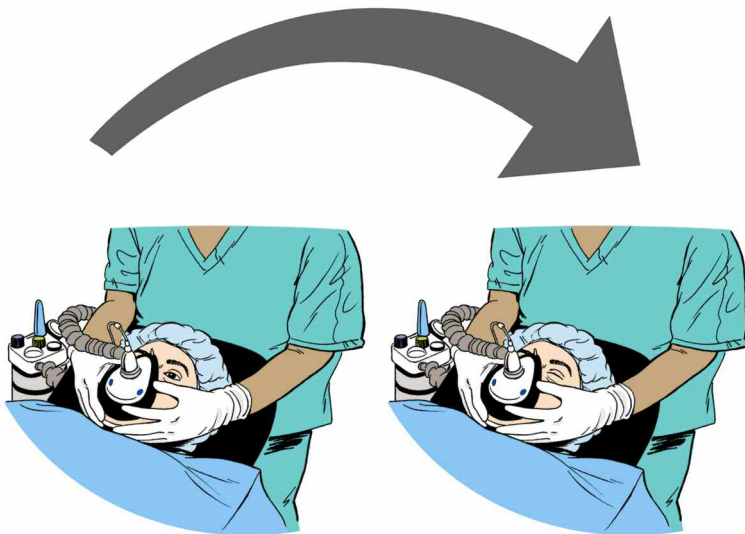
The nurse will clean and possibly shave the part of your body that is going to be operated on.



Having surgery



For major surgery you will have a **general anaesthetic**. This is an injection of medicine into your arm to make you feel sleepy.



Then you breathe in gas through a face mask. This will put you into a deep sleep during the operation.



This means that you won't feel anything while the operation is done. When you are completely asleep the surgeon will do the operation.

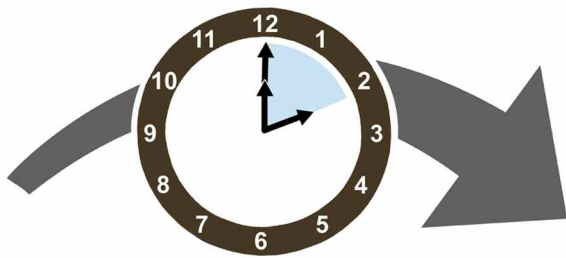


Having surgery

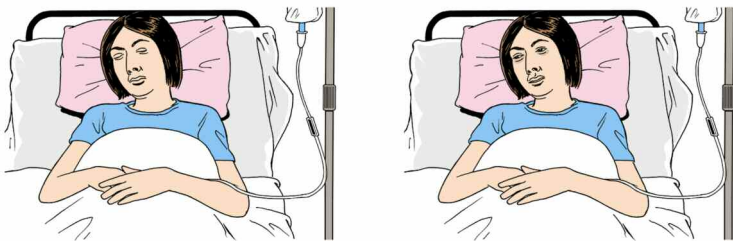
Recovery after surgery



After surgery you will be taken to a recovery room. This is where you are looked after until you wake up.



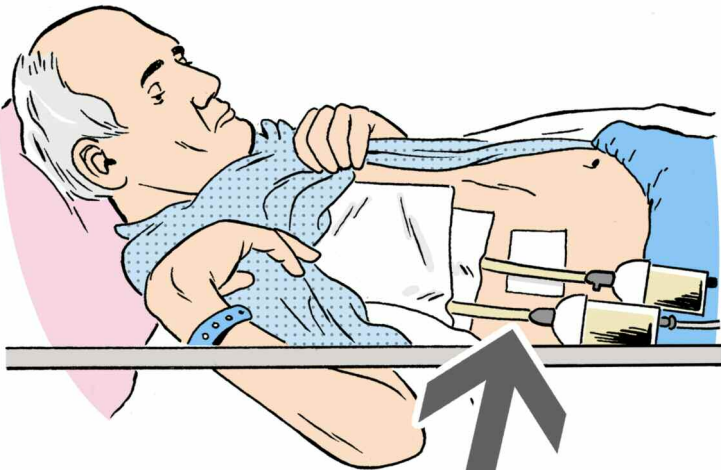
If you have had a general anaesthetic you usually wake up within one to two hours.



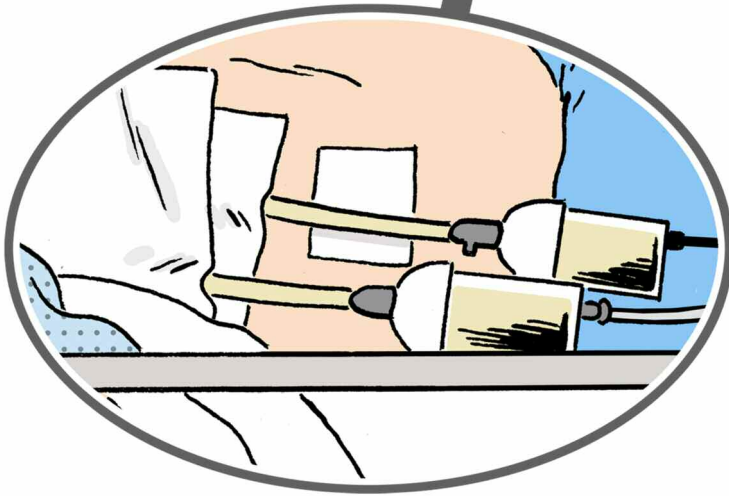
When you wake, you may still feel sleepy and dazed for some time.



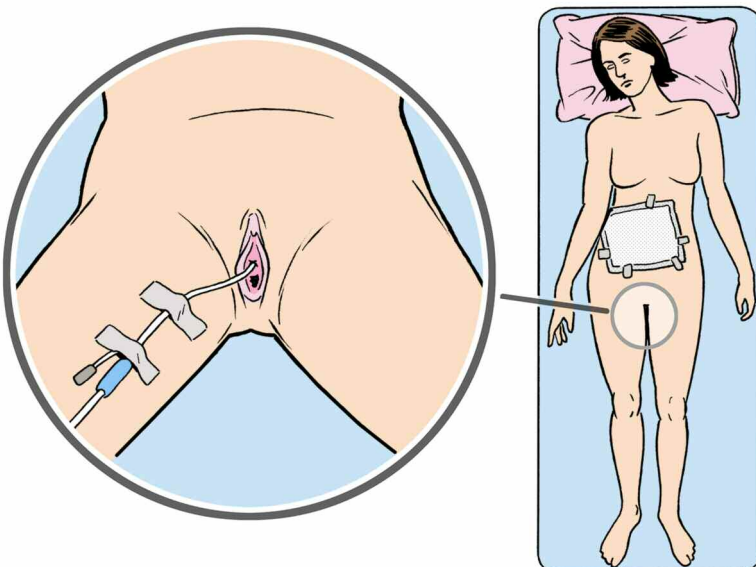
Having surgery



You might have some tubes coming out of your body where the operation was done.



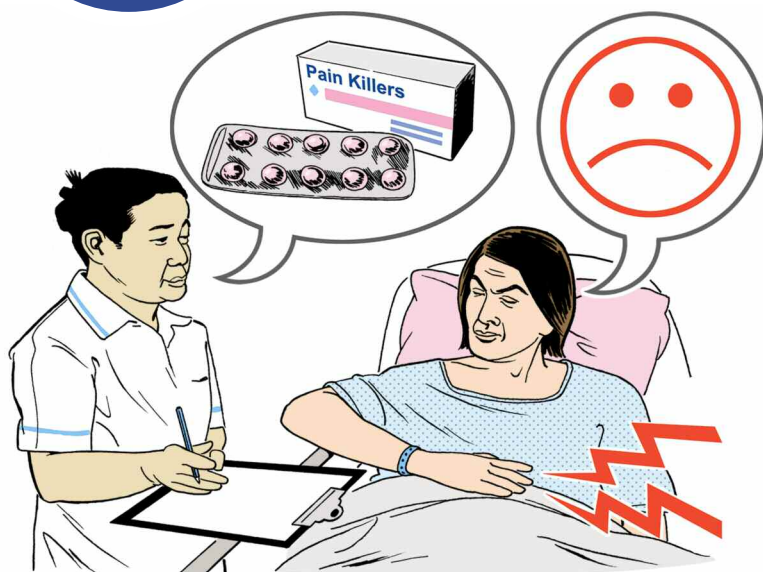
These are called drains. They are used to collect any fluid that comes from your **wound**.



You might also have a tube coming out from where you wee. This is so you can wee without getting up to go to the toilet. This is called a **catheter**.



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You might feel pain. It's important to tell your nurse or supporter if you are in pain. You can have medicine to help.

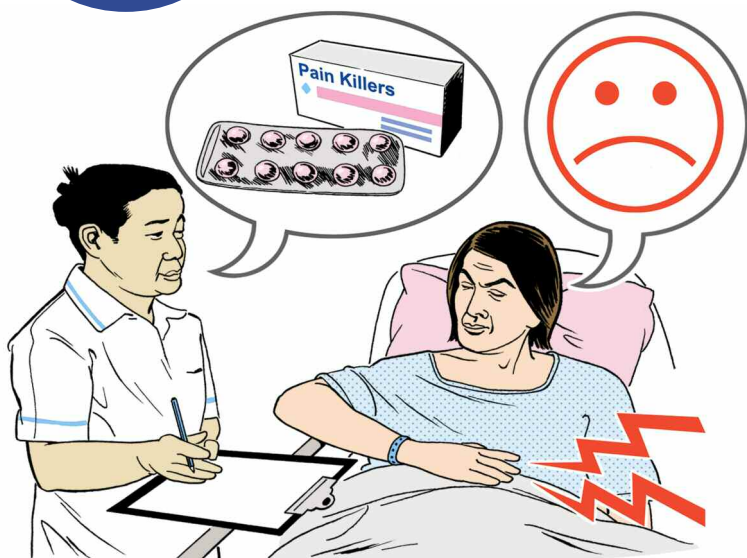
Surgery - side effects



There are sometimes side effects after surgery. Side effects are things that happen in your body because of the surgery.

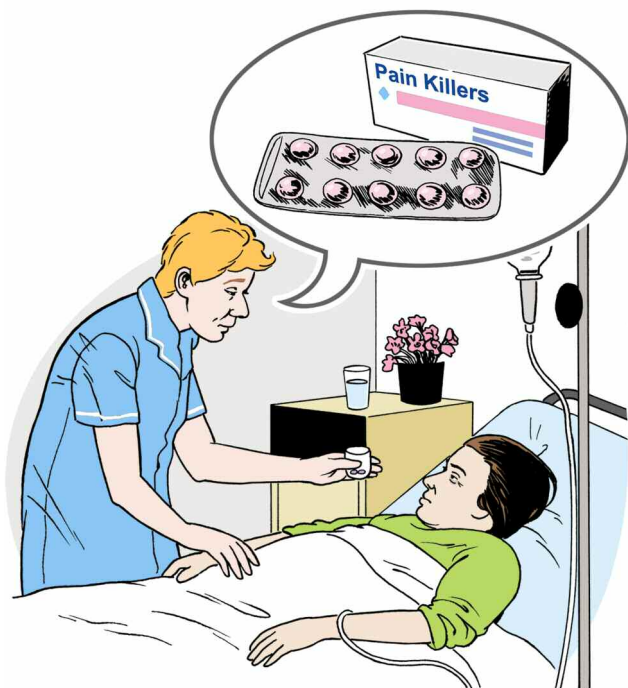


Having surgery



Side effects can be:

- **Pain:**
You will usually have some pain after an operation. It is very important to tell your nurse or doctor that you are in pain.



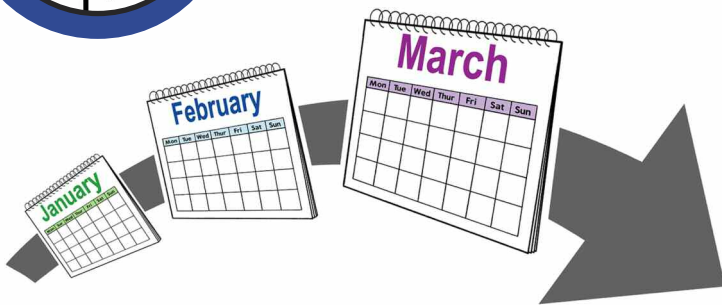
They can give you medicine to stop the pain.



- **Swelling, soreness and stiffness:**
It's normal for the area of the operation to be swollen, sore or stiff.



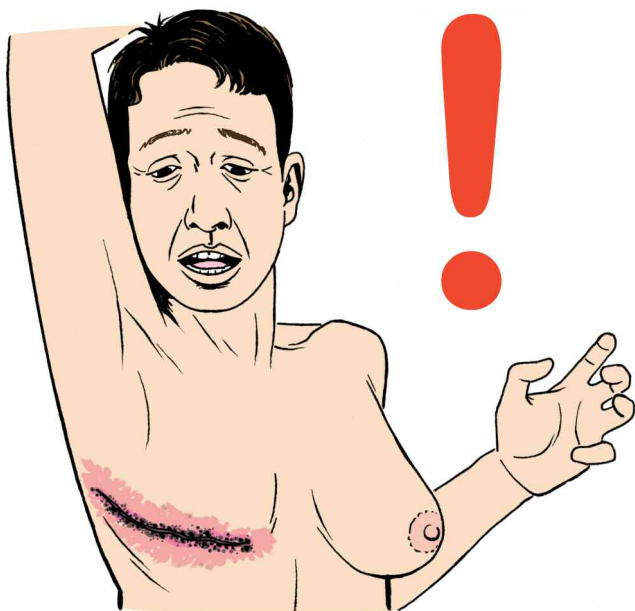
Having surgery



This should slowly get better as you heal.



If it becomes bad, you should ask for medicine for the pain.



- **Infection:**
After an operation the wound can get infected. This means it won't heal very well. This can make you ill.



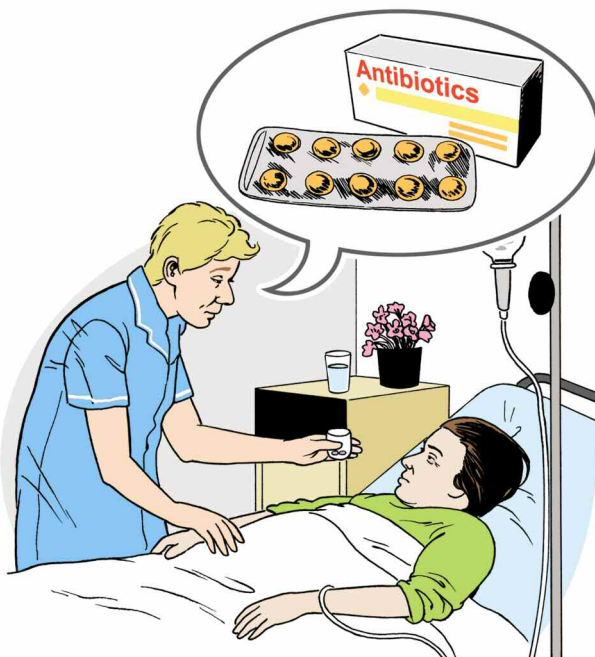
Having surgery



It is important that wounds are kept clean and the dressings are changed often. In hospital, a nurse will do this for you.



When you go home a nurse may come to your house to check and clean your wound.

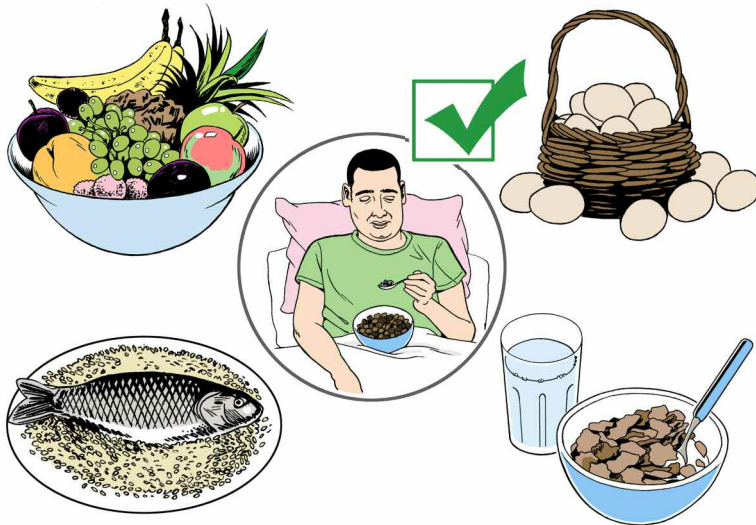


If your wound becomes infected the doctor may give you some **antibiotics**. This is medicine to stop the infection.



Having surgery

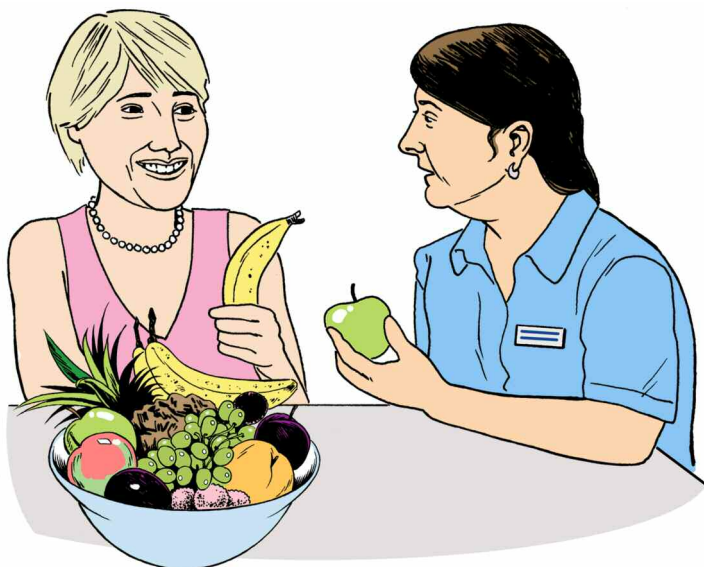
Diet after surgery



After surgery you will need to eat healthy food. This helps your body to heal.



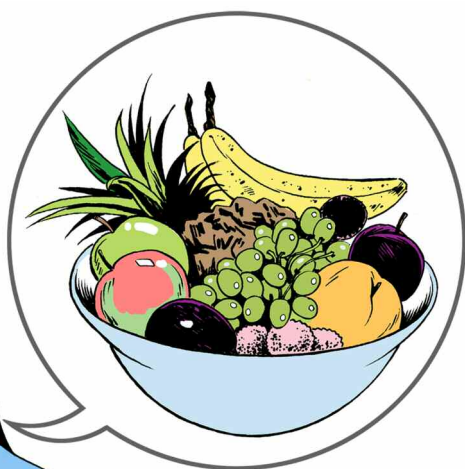
Some operations can make eating hard. For example, operations on your throat, stomach or **bowel**.



If your operation affects how you eat, you will see a **dietitian**.



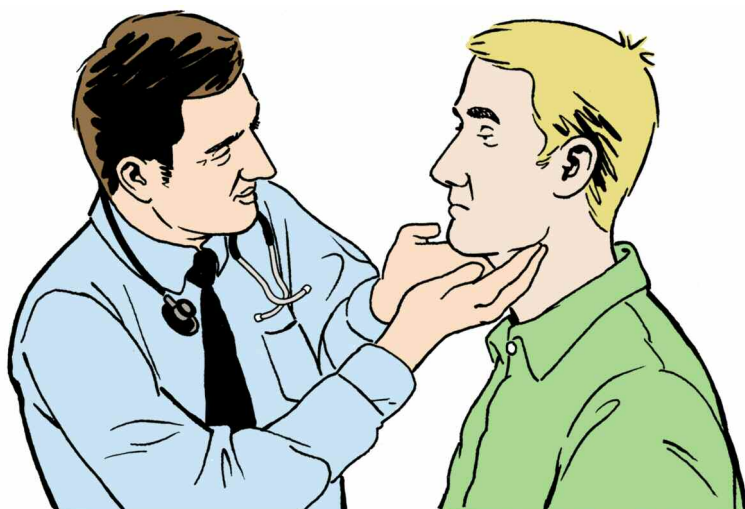
Having surgery



A dietitian is a food expert. They can help you find foods you can eat.



You may also be given high energy drinks or powders. These can help you stay healthy until you can eat normal foods.



If you have any problems after surgery, talk to a doctor or nurse.

Word Bank



Drawing by Tracey Harrison

Volunteer and Illustrator with learning disabilities

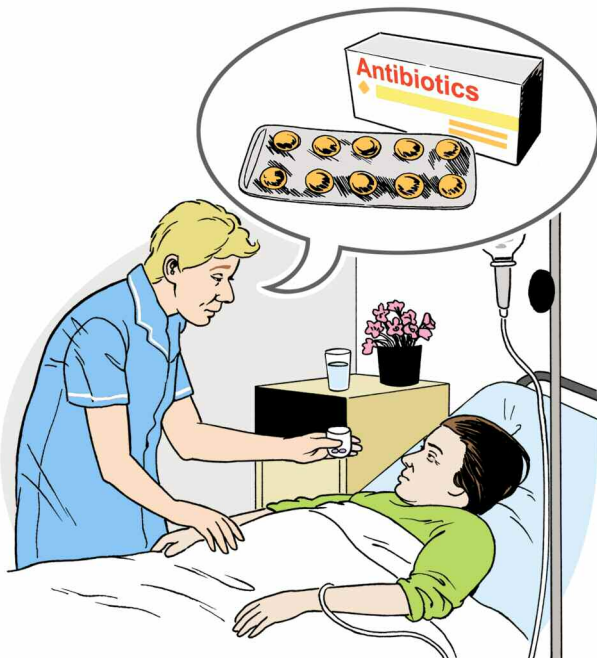


Word Bank



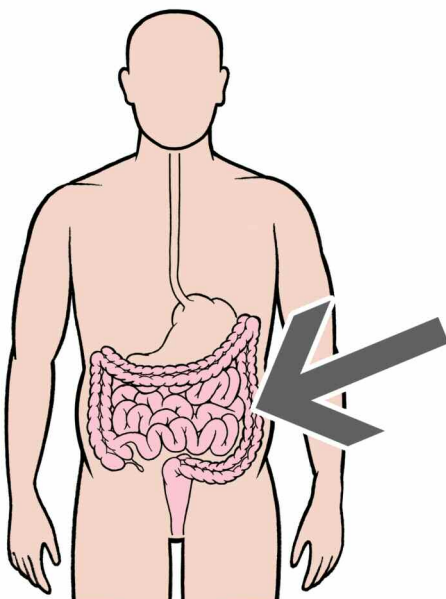
Asthma

A condition where people find it hard to breathe.



Antibiotics

These are types of medicines that kill harmful bacteria in your body.

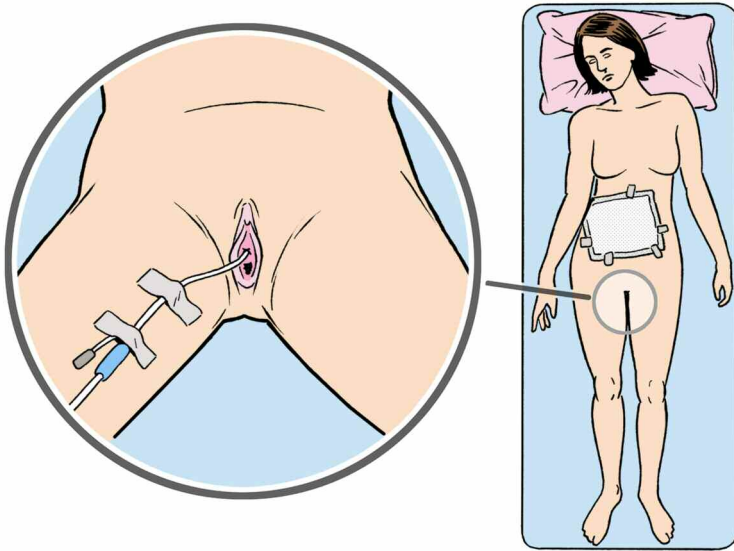


Bowel

The bowel is inside your body. It is a long tube which helps digest food.



Word Bank



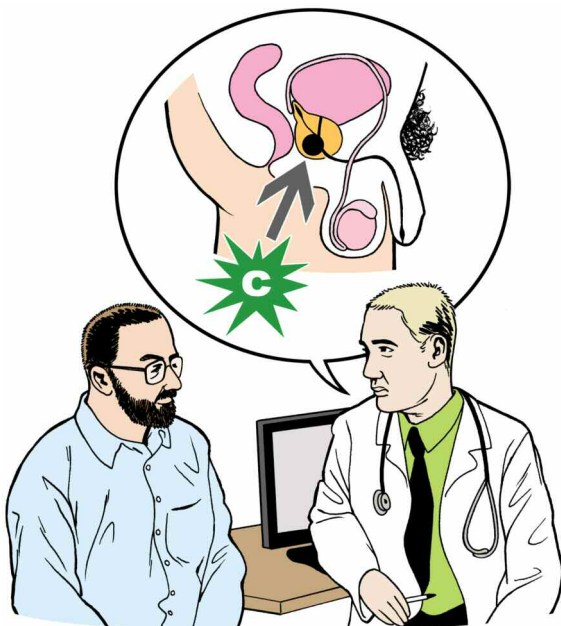
Catheter

A thin plastic tube that comes out of the hole you wee from. It is put there so you can wee without getting up to go to the toilet.



Diabetes

An illness where the body cannot use up sugar properly.

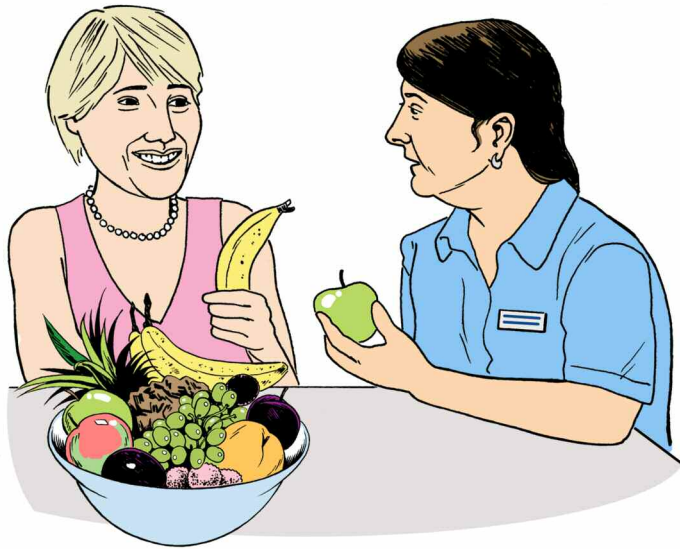


Diagnosis

A diagnosis is finding out whether you have an illness or not.

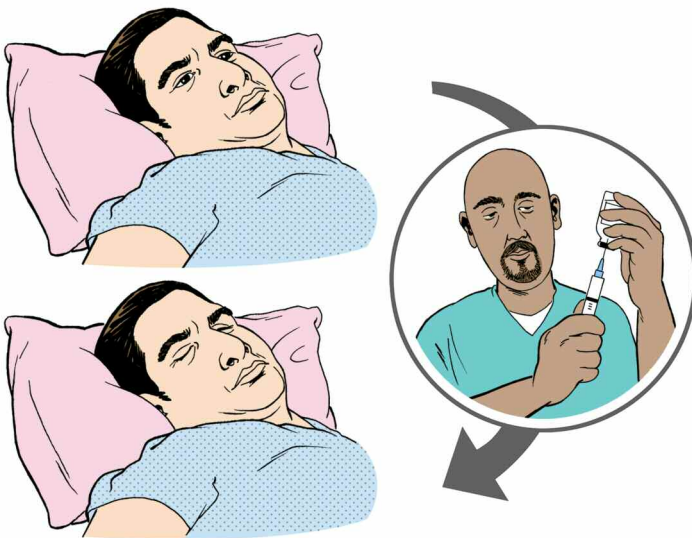


Word Bank



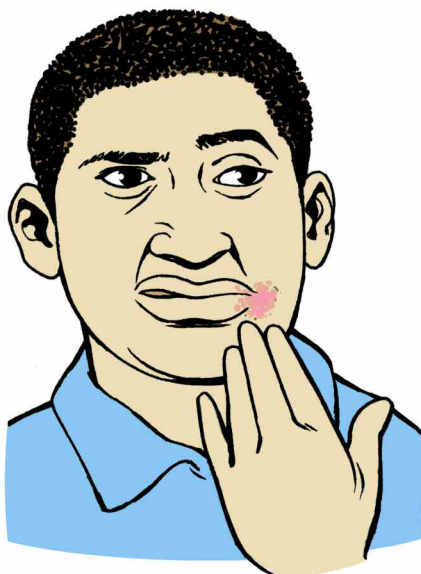
Dietitian

A dietitian knows about food and diet. They can help with any problems with eating and food.



General anaesthetic

This is medicine to make you go to sleep for a short time, so you don't feel any pain when you have an operation.



Infection

An infection is when your body is attacked by a bacteria or virus. Infections cause you harm and might make you feel unwell.

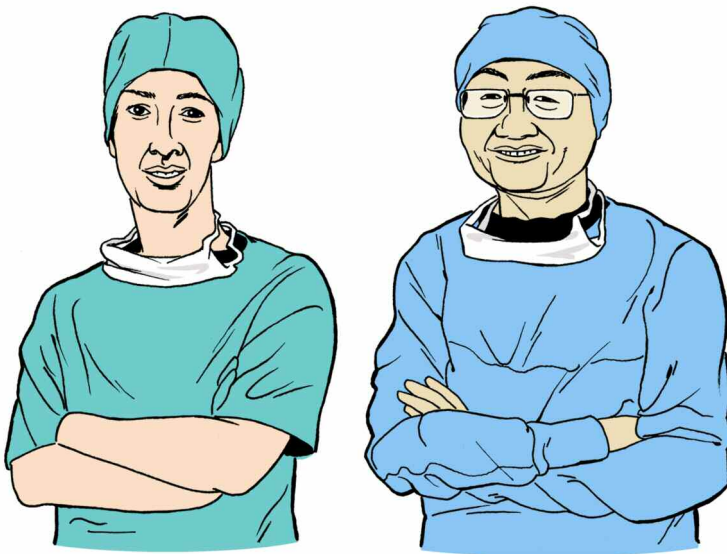


Word Bank



Operation

When a doctor cuts into someone's body to repair or take out the damaged or diseased part.



Surgeon

A doctor who is specially trained to do operations.

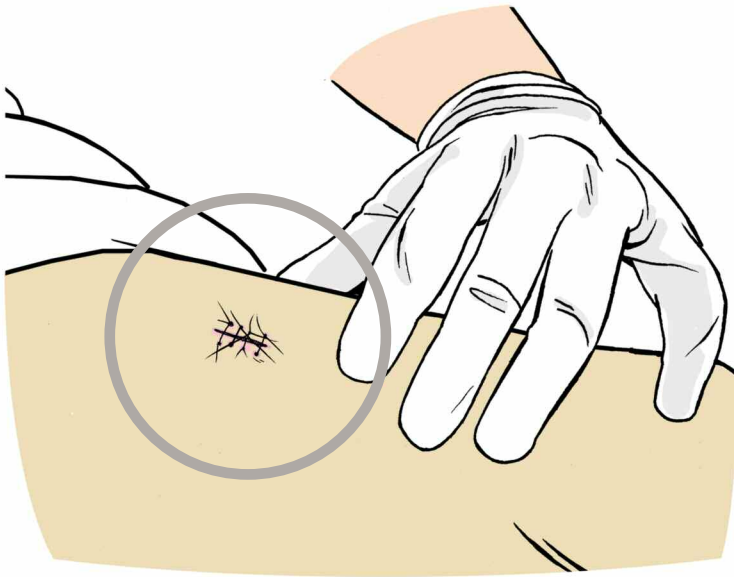


Surgery

This means having an operation.



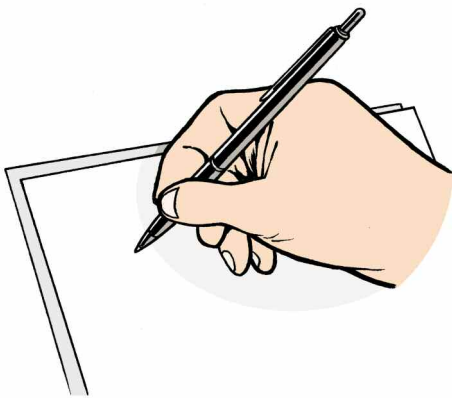
Word Bank



Wound

A cut in the skin where an operation was done.

Notes...



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Useful contacts



Drawing by Tracey Harrison

Volunteer and Illustrator with learning disabilities



Useful contacts

Helpful organisations

Cancer Research UK

A charity that is researching treatments for cancer. Its website has lots of information about cancer.

Phone: 0808 800 4040

Web: www.cancerresearchuk.org



Macmillan Cancer Support

A charity that helps people who have cancer. They give practical, medical and financial support. They try to make cancer care in the UK better.

Phone: 0808 808 00 00

Web: www.macmillan.org.uk

NHS Contacts

These contacts give you information about your health and health services:

England and Scotland **Phone:** 111

Wales **Phone:** 0845 46 47

Northern Ireland **Web:** www.hscni.net

Paul's Cancer Support Centre

Gives help, information and complementary therapies to people with cancer.

Phone: 0207 924 3924

Web: www.paulscancersupportcentre.org.uk



Useful contacts

RESPOND

Gives therapy to people with learning disabilities after trauma or abuse. They also offer training and support to carers.

Phone: 0808 808 07 00

Web: www.respond.org.uk

Written and audio material

Books Beyond Words

A series of picture books for people with learning disabilities. The books talk about cancer, health and bereavement.

Web: www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk

Phone: 020 8877 9799

Email: admin@booksbeyondwords.co.uk

FAIR Multimedia

Publishes a range of health leaflets, audio discs and CDs for people with learning disabilities. This includes a series on cancer.

Email: fair@fairadvice.org.uk

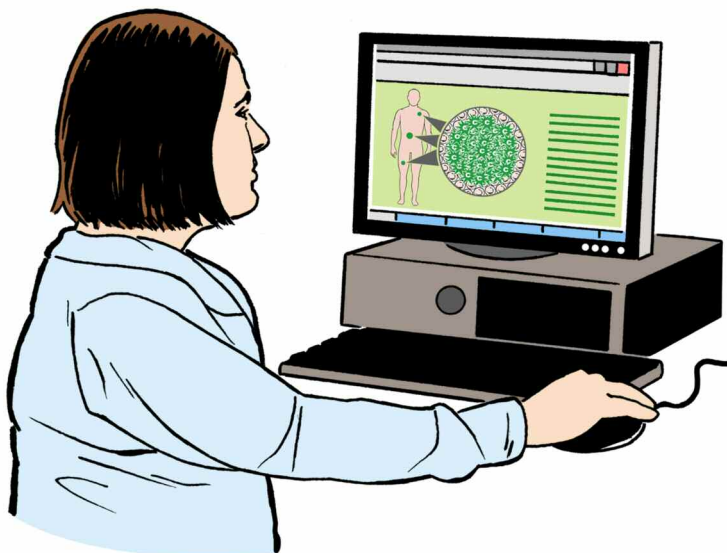
Phone: 0131 662 1962

Web: www.fairadvice.org.uk/health-publications.php



Useful contacts

Online help



www.easyhealth.org.uk

Has lots of online health information that is easy to understand.

www.macmillan.org.uk

Has lots of information about cancer and where to get help. You can also talk to other people with cancer in the online community.

Videos and DVDs

Leeds Animation Workshop

Has animated films on social issues for people with learning disabilities. There is one called 'Getting Better' about going to the doctor and the health clinic.

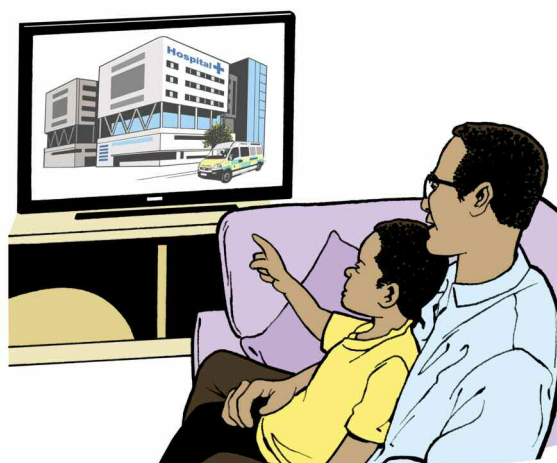
Phone: 0113 248 4997

Web: www.leedsanimation.org.uk/index.html

Speak Up Self Advocacy

Has DVDs and booklets for people with learning disabilities about health and illness.

Web: www.speakup.org.uk





CHANGE is a leading national Human Rights organisation led by disabled people. We work for equal rights for all people with learning disabilities. The cancer books and booklets that CHANGE have produced are part of an ongoing campaign to raise awareness about the issues of cancer for people with learning disabilities. You can call CHANGE on **0113 242 6619**, email **info@changepeople.org** or find us at **www.changepeople.org**

WE ARE MACMILLAN. CANCER SUPPORT

Macmillan Cancer Support has reviewed the information in this booklet and paid for it to be produced. They are a charity who help people with cancer. They have nurses and other health workers. They try to make cancer care in the UK better. They have experts who can answer your questions about cancer and how it affects your life. You can call **Macmillan** on **0808 808 00 00** or textphone **0808 808 0121 (Mon–Fri, 9am–8pm)**. Or go to **macmillan.org.uk**

This easy read booklet was produced by CHANGE

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