



North Bristol
NHS Trust

Service:
General Surgery

Surgical Assessment Unit - Gate 32b



Exceptional healthcare, personally delivered

Why am I here?

You have been transferred to this unit for assessment by doctors from the surgical team. This does not necessarily mean that you need an operation but your doctor feels you may have a surgical cause for your problem, which needs an admission to hospital.

Most surgical problems can be managed without the need for emergency surgery, but you may need further tests or investigations first.

These investigations will help the doctor decide whether you need to be admitted to a ward or can be managed in the Surgical Assessment Unit (SAU).

If it is thought that we might be able to complete tests without admission or return you home on the same day, you will be transferred to the surgical day unit area (Gate 36) for assessment and tests. This may involve coming back the next day.

The surgical assessment unit is an acute unit where we assess patients for emergency surgical admission. If we feel that you do not require any immediate surgical care you may be discharged home possibly with outpatient follow up, asked to come to the Surgical Day Assessment Unit or referred to a different speciality for further assessment.

If the doctor has determined that you need to stay in hospital

you may be transferred to a bed on a different ward. It may be that we do not find a cause for your problem but you should be reassured that we have excluded any serious surgical cause.

What will happen?

You will be in the unit for several hours or days before we are able to say what is wrong with you and you may be seen by multiple doctors.

Your diagnosis and plan for ongoing care may change as results from tests and investigations are obtained. If you need longer treatment as an inpatient you will be transferred to a different ward.

The average stay on SAU is two days. If you require sub-specialist care, for example from the urology or vascular GI surgery teams or if you undergo major surgery, you will be moved to a specialist ward. Sometimes you will have care in a high dependency unit or even intensive care immediately after an operation.

We run a system where patients with emergency conditions are treated by a consultant of the correct sub-specialty so it is possible that you may be transferred to the care of a different team as soon as we have a diagnosis.

We all work in teams so it is also possible that you may see more than one consultant during your stay. You will have a named consultant responsible for your care.

Can I eat and drink?

On admission to SAU all patients are asked not to eat anything until a plan of care has been made but you can drink clear fluids (without milk). Once you have been reviewed by a senior doctor you will be informed whether you can continue eating. Sometimes you need to be nil by mouth to fluids as well as food in preparation for an operation or a test. If this is going to take a long time then fluids may be given through the cannula in your arm. If you are kept completely nil by mouth for longer than two hours please inform the nurse looking after you.

What do I need to bring with me?

Bring essential toiletries and nightwear including a dressing gown and slippers. Good quality slippers prevent falls and a dressing gown is important as keeping warm prevents wound infections.

It is important you bring your normal day clothes with you as, if you are able, we expect you to be as mobile as possible. This is important as it prevents weakening of the muscles and other complications such as a chest infection.

We want you to be involved in your care

We want you to be active in your healthcare. You can help with this by telling us what is important to you and asking us questions.

These three questions may be useful things to ask on admission and during your stay on the surgical assessment unit:



As you prepare to leave hospital you may need to get certain things organised.

To help with your planning, you can ask these three questions:



**PATIENT
APPROVED** 

For further information, please speak to
the staff looking after you.

 0117 4143233 or via the
hospital switchboard.

 www.nbt.nhs.uk

If you or the individual you are caring for need support reading
this leaflet please ask a member of staff for advice.

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take part...
be involved...
in research



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invited to take part in a research study.

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www.nbt.nhs.uk/research



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