

# THE PREPWEELL PROGRAMME

## GETTING YOU IN THE BEST HEALTH FOR YOUR OPERATION

### WHAT AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN?

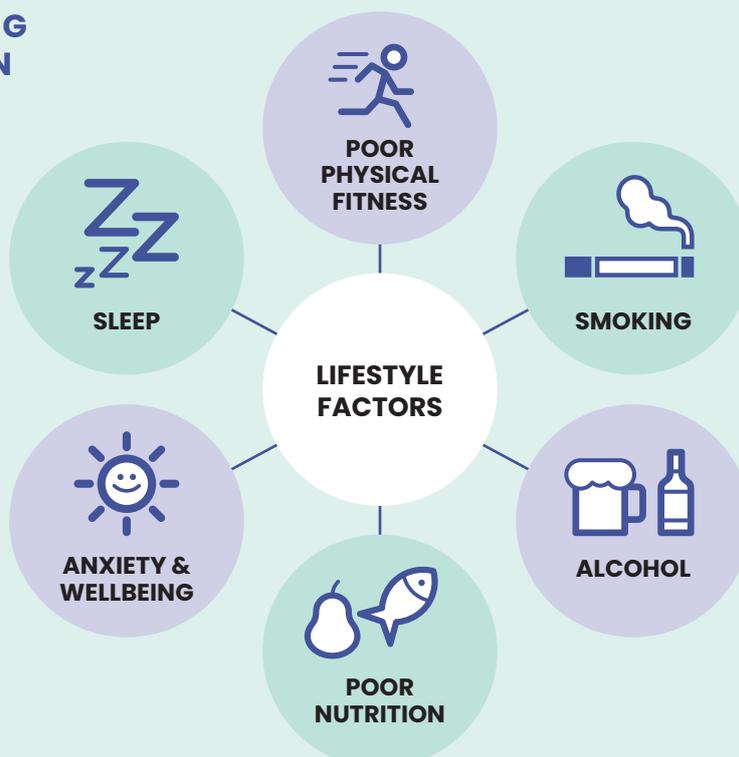
We are inviting you to be part of the Prepwell programme, this is a supervised service designed to support you in improving your fitness, health and wellbeing before your planned operation or treatment. Some benefits can be achieved in as little as 2 weeks, through making simple lifestyle changes such as increasing exercise and activity. The programme is free and has been designed by a variety of professionals including: doctors with experience of caring for patients having surgery, physiotherapists with rehabilitation experience, and exercise and public health specialists. The programme is supported in a partnership between South Tees NHS Foundation Trust, Public Health South Tees and NHS Tees Valley CCG.

We are delighted to be able to offer you the opportunity to be part of this. Please take the time to read the rest of this leaflet.

### WHY IS IMPROVING MY HEALTH AND FITNESS BEFORE SURGERY OR TREATMENT IMPORTANT?

Having an operation can affect your body for several months afterwards. Several common lifestyle factors can reduce your body's ability to deal with the physical stress of the operation. These are shown in the diagram below. In addition, if you have been diagnosed with cancer you may undergo chemotherapy or radiotherapy before your operation. These essential treatments prior to cancer surgery can unfortunately reduce your body's ability to cope with the operation. The resultant effect of these factors is that you may be at an increased risk of complications following your operation, a prolonged hospital stay and problems when you leave hospital (such as reduced independence).

### FACTORS AFFECTING YOUR PREPARATION AND RECOVERY FROM SURGERY AND OTHER TREATMENTS



## WHAT DOES THE PROGRAMME INVOLVE?

The programme is designed to help improve your general health and wellbeing in the lead up to your operation or treatment, by getting you in the best shape possible. Different people will have different factors that affect their risks with surgery. Depending on your personal situation your programme may include one or more of the following areas of support:

- **An exercise programme:** We will support you to improve your general fitness and strength with a variety of different choices available to hopefully cater for as many people as possible. These choices include face-to-face group exercise classes, supervised online exercise classes and personalised supported home programmes. Depending on which programme you choose, we may provide you with equipment to support your exercise plan such as a heart rate monitor (to guide your level of exercise) and resistance bands to help build up your strength.
- **Dietary support and advice:** This will give you the information you need to be able to follow a healthy diet in preparation for your surgery. In patients who are malnourished we will also be able to support you with nutritional supplements if required.
- **Alcohol support:** To reduce your drinking to safe levels if we agree together this is required.
- **Quit smoking support:** To help you to stop smoking before surgery if we agree together this is required.
- **General wellbeing and support:** To help reduce anxiety about your operation and also to help improve your sleep.
- **Assessment of other Health Problems:** Any existing conditions or new conditions that may increase your risk can be reviewed. We can help co-ordinate many areas of your care with hospital specialists.
- **General advice and support to help prepare you for surgery or treatment:** People have many different questions and concerns about their operation and treatment. We are here to support you with any additional information you feel you may require, please just ask.

**The strength of the programme is that our team can hopefully provide all of the support you will need in one place.**

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## DO I HAVE TO PAY ANYTHING TO PARTICIPATE?

No, the programme is free. The only costs associated will be for travel or parking where you choose the face-to-face-classes or we need to do an assessment with you in person. Unfortunately we are unable to cover these costs.

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## HOW LONG IS THE PROGRAMME FOR?

The programme is designed to fill the time whilst you are waiting to have your operation. This time will generally range from 4-12 weeks. The longer you work with us in the programme the greater the benefits you are likely to achieve.

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## WILL MY OPERATION BE DELAYED IF I DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE?

No, you will be invited to participate in the programme in the time you have available before your surgery or treatment. Your operation will NOT be delayed as a result of participation, unless the hospital team caring for you feel it is in your interests to spend a bit longer improving your health. Fortunately you can make major improvements to your health and fitness even within a short timeframe, leading to reduced risks with surgery and a faster recovery. The aim of the programme is to help you achieve this in a supportive and supervised environment. The programme has the full support of all the doctors and healthcare professionals looking after you.

## **WILL MY OPERATION BE DELAYED OR CANCELLED IF I DECIDE NOT TO PARTICIPATE?**

No. Participation in the programme is voluntary, and we would like you to participate because you want to improve your own personal health and wellbeing before surgery or treatment. You are far more likely to enjoy the programme and see the benefits under these circumstances.

## **IF I AM INTERESTED WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

Initially we will call you to ensure you are interested in the programme and see if you have any questions about participation. If you still want to take part we will send you a consent form in the post (with a stamped addressed envelope) that you need to read, sign and then send back to us. This gives us your permission to get you started in the programme.

We will then need to collect some initial information about you to assess your health and lifestyle. This will consist of a health and lifestyle questionnaire. These usually take 30-45 minutes to complete but can be done in your own time and convenience at home. We have a variety of ways you can complete the questionnaires. These include online (if you are confident and have access to the internet) or by completing the questionnaires on paper if you prefer this method. We can support either option through a telephone call if needed.

The team will then review this information and then contact you to discuss the support we feel you would most benefit from as part of your programme. This will be us guiding you, however you will have final say in what you are happy to do.

**The Prepwell service helps and supports you to make a smooth recovery after surgery or treatment by allowing you to play an active part in your own care.**

## **WHAT IF I DON'T NORMALLY EXERCISE?**

Don't be concerned if you are not used to exercising or don't do any regular physical activity, that's why we are here. During your initial assessment with our team we will be able to discuss your starting level of fitness and then set you up with a programme that is best suited to you and which you are comfortable with. The idea is that we will then support you to gradually increase your level of fitness and exercise in the time available before surgery. This will hopefully ensure you are in the best possible shape at the time of your operation.

## WILL THERE BE OTHER PEOPLE ABOUT WHILST I AM EXERCISING?

Not necessarily, this will depend on the type of programme you choose and what you feel comfortable with. A range of choices will be available for you including:

- **Online classes:** These are enjoyable for many people and involve exercising in your own home but with the support of our team through a computer or mobile phone on Zoom. Up to 10 people can be involved in these classes that are directly supervised by our staff. During the sessions you can talk to other people in the class or with our staff if you have any questions. The classes are usually for 45-60 minutes and run twice a week. This creates a positive social atmosphere for many of our patients and also provides the opportunity to make new friends! Our feedback from patients on these classes has been very positive.
- **Face to face classes:** When Covid-19 restrictions allow, we will hopefully be able to restart our exercise classes that you can attend in person. The classes are for 6-10 people to attend and are run by our staff at the Live Well Centre in central Middlesbrough. The classes usually last for about an hour and are designed to be enjoyable by getting you to do a range of different exercises (to suit your ability). The sessions provide an excellent opportunity to meet people and ask our staff about a variety of topics from your surgery to the best place to have a cup of coffee afterwards! We will do our best to answer them! Patient feedback on these classes has been excellent.
- **Home exercise plan:** Some people may choose this option to suit their personal circumstances or because they feel uncomfortable exercising with others. If you choose this option we will set up your exercise programme to suit your choice. For people who like working with computers we can provide your exercise programme through our digital patient system which is called GoWellHealth. This option includes videos to follow which have been created by our team. This is easy to use and we will help you to get set up on it.  
  
For people who don't like computers we can provide you with a paper-based booklet to guide your exercises. With both options you can contact us as often as required for support. The home exercise plan is ideal for people who are more self-motivated or prefer to exercise at their own convenience.

## IS IT SAFE TO PARTICIPATE IN EXERCISE PRIOR TO SURGERY?

Yes, exercise is generally safe and good for your health. The risk of harm to you whilst exercising is very low. To ensure your safety the exercise programme has been designed by a team of professionals (including doctors) with a lot of relevant experience. We understand that some people may have health conditions which make it difficult to do certain exercises, this will be taken into account and a range of options will be available to support you to get in the best health possible before surgery. If there are any concerns about exercising from you, or us, these can be discussed privately before or at any time during the programme.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF MY OPERATION IS RESCHEDULED OR CANCELLED?

Sometimes your operation may be delayed for reasons beyond anyone's control. Although we hope this doesn't happen to you, you can continue with the programme whilst waiting for another date for your operation.

## CAN I STOP THE PROGRAMME?

Yes, you can stop the programme at any time. However, this will mean that any benefits that you have gained by taking part may be lost. If you have difficulty attending, or dislike any of the parts of the programme, you can discuss these issues with us and we will try and work with you to fix them.

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## WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END OF THE PROGRAMME?

At the end of the programme, but before you have your operation, we will ask you to complete a follow-up questionnaire to help us assess any improvements you have made to your health and lifestyle. As before this can be done on a computer or on paper depending on your preference.

With your permission we will then contact you after your operation to check on your recovery and progress. These short contacts will usually be at 3 and 12 months following surgery.

Follow-up appointments are very important to allow us to get your feedback and also assess the health and lifestyle benefits we have helped you to achieve. This information will help us to continue to improve things for other people we may care for in the future.

We may occasionally ask some people if they are happy to be part of a small group (4-6 people) to answer specific questions about the programme. These focus groups are designed to develop the programme based on your personal experiences and feedback. They are completely voluntary so please feel free to say no if you are asked but don't want to take part.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN ABOUT SUPPORT AFTER MY SURGERY AND REHABILITATION?

Before you leave hospital you may be given advice and simple exercises to perform by the physiotherapist and occupational therapists to help with your recovery. We also plan to stay in regular contact with you through our follow-up contacts as described in the section above. You are also free to contact us at any time after your surgery if you feel you need further support or have questions.

At the present time we are unable to offer you a formal supervised rehabilitation programme after your surgery, however this is something we are currently trying to develop.

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## WILL TAKING PART IN THIS PROGRAMME BENEFIT ME IN THE LONG TERM?

Any lifestyle changes that you make will not only benefit you with your operation but will also have long-term benefits if you continue. Research has shown that they will help to prevent the development of chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, stroke etc. This will help you to remain fit and well, as you get older. If you require on-going support with any of these lifestyle changes, further referral can be made to ensure that you get the support that you require. Studies in surgical patients show that positive changes made before surgery can persist long after surgery.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ANY INFORMATION THAT IS COLLECTED ABOUT ME DURING THE PROGRAMME?

As with all hospital services, we will need to collect information about you. This is required to ensure we offer the right programme for you and will allow us to see how you have benefitted from taking part in the programme. Some of this information will be held as paper records with most being stored on a secure electronic database. Only people involved in your care will be able to access it. All patient data will be stored to comply with the South Tees hospitals policies and will remain anonymous and confidential at all times.

On some occasions we may need to access your GP records to help us plan your programme. We will only do this if it is necessary. Finally we may on occasions present some of the data from the programme at national meetings or as publications in healthcare journals. Where this is done your information may be used, however this will remain anonymous and completely confidential so that nothing about you will be identifiable.

If you have any questions or concerns around this then please feel free to discuss it with the programme team.

## HOW CAN I CONTACT THE PROGRAMME TEAM OR FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION?

If you have any queries or questions, or are unable to make an appointment and need to rearrange it please contact the Prepwell Team on

**Phone:** 01642 850850 ext 52341

**Email:** [stees.prepwell@nhs.net](mailto:stees.prepwell@nhs.net)

**Website:** [www.prepwell.co.uk](http://www.prepwell.co.uk)

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Version: 2

Review date:

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