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information

your SURGICAL PATHWAY

This surgical pathway tells you more about what happens when you have cardiac surgery. Your team may first talk to you about this in your local clinic and then refer you to The Bristol Heart Institute, which is the specialist centre for adult congenital cardiac surgery in South Wales and the South West.



Attending the surgical clinic to meet the surgeon

- You will receive an appointment to meet your cardiac surgeon. There are three congenital surgeons who operate on adults born with heart conditions.
- The surgeon will explain your heart condition to you and explain how it can be repaired. Diagrams or picture may be used to help with this. The post-operative recovery will be explained and the risks of surgery will be discussed.
- You may be asked to sign your consent at this appointment or this may be done the night before your operation.



Following your surgical appointment

- You will receive a letter summarising your meeting with the surgeon and a copy will go to your GP. A copy will also go to your referring cardiologist, if you are seen in one of the peripheral or outreach clinics.
- When there is a date for surgery you will receive a letter inviting you to come to pre-assessment at The Bristol Heart Institute.

CARDIAC WARD

Admission to the cardiac ward on the day before your operation

- You will be asked to attend the Bristol Heart Institute outpatients for a pre-operative meeting with an anaesthetist.
- You may discuss and sign your consent with one of the surgical team at this appointment, if this was not done when you met the surgeon.
- On the morning of the procedure you will be prepared for theatre, you will have a shower with antiseptic skin wash and put on your hospital gown.
- You may be given some sedation to help you relax.



Admission to the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit

- When you are admitted to the Intensive Care Unit you will be attached to a number of drips and drains, and have an oxygen mask. This is routine for everyone who has cardiac surgery. You will be attached to the cardiac monitor so the team can see how you are progressing.
- You will be given the medication you need, including painkillers to keep you comfortable.
- When you are clinically stable the equipment will be removed.
- You will be moved out of the Intensive Care Unit and will be helped to sit out of bed as soon as you are well enough.

CARDIAC WARD

Transfer to the Cardiac Ward

- By the time you are on the ward, you will be walking around your bed space area and starting to do some physiotherapy.
- You will be eating and drinking and your appetite will slowly return to normal.
- You will be helped into the shower and you can get dressed.
- On average people go home 6-7 days after their operation. If it is your second or third operation your stay is likely to be slightly longer.



Before you go home

- You will be given advice about your recovery and medication.
- Your follow-up appointment will be in 4 weeks in Bristol.
- If you attend one of our outreach clinics you will be discharged from the Bristol Heart Institute after your first post-operative appointment and your next follow-up will be with your local cardiologist.
- A letter will be written to summarise the care you have had in the Bristol Heart Institute and the plan for your ongoing care. You will be seen again by your local cardiologist or back at the Bristol Heart Institute at an appropriate time, depending on your progress.