

VIDEO ASSISTED THORACOSCOPIC SURGERY **(VATS)**

WHAT IS A VATS?

This is a 'key hole' procedure where investigations can be made in to identifying types of chest and lung diseases. The procedure is done under a general anaesthetic, whereby two small incisions are made between the ribs in the side of the chest. This allows a small camera to be passed in to the chest so that your surgeon can take biopsies, remove fluid or remove any abnormal tissue.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN BEFORE MY SURGERY?

Before having this procedure you will undergo other investigations. This will include blood tests, a chest x-ray and in some cases a heart tracing. These are all normal procedures before undergoing surgery. The staff will answer your questions at any time.

WHERE WILL I GO AFTER SURGERY?

After surgery you will wake up in the recovery room and then later transfer back to the ward. The nurses will then monitor your progress and make sure that you are comfortable.

WILL I HAVE A DRAIN?

You will have a drain placed near to where the incisions were made after the procedure. This drain allows any fluid or air to drain from the chest. The nursing staff can answer further questions about your drain.

WILL I HAVE PAIN?

Your pain will be managed as soon as you leave the operating theatre. The nurses will assess your pain and give you painkillers to keep you comfortable. The chest drain can cause some discomfort. If you are in pain then let the nurse know.

WILL I FEEL SICK?

You may feel sick after this procedure. This is often associated with the general anaesthetic you have. If you do feel sick let the nurse know as we can give you some medication to help.

WILL MY BREATHING BE AFFECTED AFTER THE OPERATION?

You will be given oxygen to assist your breathing and the nurse will closely monitor this. It is important to alert the nurse if you have any breathing difficulties.

HOW LONG CAN I EXPECT TO BE IN HOSPITAL AFTER A VATS?

On average a patient can stay in hospital between 2-5 days, however, this may be longer for some people. The surgeon will discuss your progress with you and will advise you individually.

WHAT WILL I BE ABLE TO DO WHEN I LEAVE HOSPITAL?

We would expect you to be back to the same level of mobility as before your operation when you are discharged home. You will not need someone to be with you all the time, but it is advisable not to lift heavy loads for 4- 6 weeks. You will have an outpatient appointment with your Consultants team between 2-6 weeks after being discharged from hospital. If you work the Doctor will be able to advise you then when you can return. You can not fly until after your Doctor has advised you that it is safe to do so.

If you have any further questions, please speak to one of the nursing or medical staff.