

Stoma Reversal Surgery: Advice for Recovery

- 1) Can you tell us more about how you were initially offered the reversal?

After my first surgery it was something I was pushing for, I was given the information that 16 weeks would be needed before the reversal could take place. The conversation was part of the after surgery communications as my surgery was an emergency and reversible.

- 2) How were you feeling in the run up to the surgery?

I was very anxious due to the issues of my 2 previous surgeries but I couldn't say anything as I didn't want my family to feel the same way, I was keen to get the surgery done, I had spent many months talking myself out of it, I had talked myself out of it so many times due to not having any issues with my stoma but guessing that might be different if I was having problems.

- 3) Did you need to prepare for the surgery in any way before it went ahead?

Not really apart from the normal pre assessment procedure from the hospital i.e. meetings with anaesthetist and having to consume the preloaded drinks a few days before.

- 4) How did things go on the day of the surgery itself? How long was your stay in hospital?

The day of the surgery went well, I got dropped off at the hospital at 9 and proceeded to the theatre lounge to be booked in, once I was in the hospital I was calming down and went through the paperwork had all my observations done, I then had to sit and wait until 11ish then I was taken down to the theatre, to be made ready for my reversal, I came around at about 6pm, and feeling ok apart from the sleep aspects. I stayed in for about a week

- 5) Stoma reversal surgery is shorter and less demanding than stoma surgery, but it was obviously a hugely significant step for you. Can you tell us how you were feeling after the procedure?

I was looking forward to my next chapter, but also thinking about how the next few days, weeks were going to pan out, I wasn't sure what was going to happen I guess I had to let nature take its course, like before it was about setting goals for myself. My surgery wound was different than before I didn't have an open wound to deal with so that was an issue I didn't need to deal with, I wasn't on pain medication for long a couple of days and slowly the tubes and drips were removed within that time as well. So, my initial recovery was going well, better than I had anticipated.

- 6) When you returned home, was there anything you needed to be mindful of regarding things like diet or exercise?

When I returned home, I thought about how I would care for myself, firstly around my bum area, because it's not been used in a few years it might have possibly got a little sore, so I set myself up a little cleaning kit which consisted of some dry wipes, Trios Elisse barrier wipes, pot of sudo cream. Cleaning yourself after you have started to use

the toilet is a good habit to get into. I wiped as normal with a damp wipe, then dry wiped and barrier wiped and sudo creamed id necessary.

On the dietary side of things small but often and I would suggest a soft diet at first and build on over the days ahead and making sure that you drink plenty of fluid. I avoided gassy drinks at first but I'm not a lover of fizzy drinks, so it wasn't too hard to achieve.

Exercise, I had a hernia repair completed at the same time so I had to refrain from heavy lifting etc, I had about 6 weeks recovery time and returned to work, I slowly built myself up by walking as much as possible as this aids the recovery but you have to remember most of your surgery is inside so when you cant see anything apart from a wound you can become complacent, so bear that in mind.

7) How did you care for your wound in the weeks after the surgery?

I was lucky as I didn't have a wound, I had my opening sealed so didn't have any open wound, the only wounds I had was 2 small holes where the vacuum pump pipes had come out, but they healed over within 24 hrs. it seemed really strange just having effectively a scar straightaway.

8) What advice would you give to anyone considering going ahead with stoma reversal surgery?

Don't read into other people's stories to much, fact find and seek information, you journey is unique to you, how you body reacts and is specific to you, take things slowly and listen to your body is it is saying stop then stop. Plan well and it will benefit you afterwards and going forward.

9) We're betting you're feeling positive about the future! What are you most looking forward to doing after you're fully recovered?

I am looking forward to regaining my drive and enthusiasm about helping others, walking, and returning to the gym and swimming. Once the weather has improved get the bike back out as well. Ive also started on a photography venture so im going to try and incorporate that and walking, getting out enjoying nature and not taking life so seriously.