



Mesh removal surgery with an independent provider

Information leaflet

Introduction

This information is for patients who are thinking about having surgery to remove vaginal mesh and wish to explore using an independent provider (non-NHS). Patients can be referred for specialist surgical mesh removal to one of two independent providers:

- Spire Healthcare, Bristol, England
- Gynecologic and Reconstructive Surgery Limited, St Louis, Missouri, USA.

Travelling to a different hospital for treatment can be daunting. This leaflet aims to answer some of the questions you may have. It also details some of the travel and accommodation arrangements.

Referral

If you have complications because of your transvaginal mesh implant, your local clinician may refer you to the Complex Mesh Surgical Service in Glasgow. They'll assess you to see if you can have your mesh removed by surgery.

Complex Mesh Surgical Service in Glasgow

The specialist multi-professional team will assess your symptoms and discuss treatment options with you. The team will provide written information to help you make decisions and give you the time you need to consider and decide upon your chosen treatment.

If you decide to have mesh removal surgery, the experienced team in Glasgow can do your surgery. This means that your treatment will be carried out as close to home as possible and you will be able to choose the consultant who provides your care.

Alternatively, you can ask for the surgery to take place outside the NHS by one of the independent providers.

The diagram on the next page shows the pathway you follow, should you choose this option.

Pre-operative assessment

This is to make sure that you are well enough to have surgery.

If you are travelling to Bristol for your surgery, you'll be asked to complete an online anaesthetic questionnaire after your referral is made. If you need help completing this Spire Healthcare can provide assistance. If a face-to-face appointment is needed, this may take place in a Spire Healthcare hospital in Edinburgh.

If you are travelling to the USA, you will need to have an NHS pre-operative assessment at your local hospital before your referral is made to the independent provider. Your local consultant will arrange for you to have this.

Treatment pathway



Payment

Do I have to pay for mesh removal surgery if I choose to be treated by an independent provider?

You will not have to pay for mesh removal treatment provided by one of the contracted independent providers. This is funded by NHS Scotland and Scottish Government.

Do I have to pay for travel and accommodation costs?

Travel and accommodation costs will be covered for you and your travel companion (who must be over 18 years old).

Is there any support provided for meals?

A daily subsistence allowance of £50 will be allocated each for you and your travelling companion for reasonable food, beverages (non alcoholic) and transport. You will need to keep all itemised receipts and itemised hotel bills to send back to NSS on your return. **NSS will not pay any expenses that are unreceipted or not itemised.** You will be asked to return any allowance that is not used to NSS.

What is not covered?

It should be noted that following won't be reimbursed by NSS:

- Tips/service charges/gratuities
- Gifts/souvenirs
- Toiletries
- Reading material/entertainment
- Alcohol

Please note, this is not an exhaustive list. We politely request that patients are prudent when spending public money. NSS reserves the right to challenge excessive reimbursement claims at its discretion.

If you require further clarification on what the allowance can/cannot be used for, please contact the mesh co-ordinator.

Travel

Do I have to organise travel and accommodation?

The mesh co-ordinator will arrange your travel and accommodation. When your referral has been authorised, you will receive a unique authorisation code. Once you have a date for surgery and your anticipated length of stay after surgery, you will need to contact the mesh co-ordinator to complete the booking form, giving your details and unique authorisation code.

The mesh co-ordinator will book accommodation as close to the hospital as possible. All outbound flights will be economy class and return international flights will be in business class for both you and your companion. Hotels or self-contained apartments will be reasonably priced.

The mesh co-ordinator will be available Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm for routine enquiries about your travel and accommodation arrangements. You will also receive an emergency out of hours contact number for when you are away from home.

Can I choose to drive to Bristol, rather than take public transport?

Yes, you can. You can claim back fuel costs at the current advisory fuel rate which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/advisory-fuel-rates>. All claims are made through NSS by contacting the mesh co-ordinator. Be aware this rate may vary according to current guidelines from the UK Government. The distance will be calculated from your home to the hospital using AA route planner.

Do I need a passport to travel?

If you are travelling to the USA, you and your companion will need to have valid passports. They must both be valid for at least six months beyond the period of intended stay. If you or your companion need a new or renewed passport the cost will be reimbursed before you travel. This will only be for new/renewal passport claims made after the decision to use independent provider has been made and agreed with your clinical team.

Do I need a visa to travel?

If you're travelling to the USA, you and your travel companion will need to complete an ESTA to enter the country under the Visa Waiver Program. This will allow you to stay in the USA for up to 90 days. There is a cost associated with this which will be reimbursed before you travel.

Applications for ESTAs can be found at

<https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta>

Do I need travel insurance?

Your travel insurance will be covered by NSS. Healix International is the contracted provider who will organise your travel to and from the UK. Healix are experienced in dealing with emergency medical assistance overseas and are available 24 hours a day. Contact details can be found at the end of the leaflet.

It's important that your companion has valid travel insurance for medical healthcare and contents. If your companion needs emergency healthcare they should contact their medical insurer.

The cost of your companion's travel insurance can be claimed back before travel from NSS by contacting the mesh co-ordinator.

Anticipated timeline

It is anticipated that the timeline for booking travel and accommodation will be as follows:

14 days prior to surgery	Contact mesh-cordinator and complete travel booking form. If you are flying to the USA make sure ESTA forms have been completed
12 days prior to surgery	Mesh co-ordinator will provide a provisional booking confirmation outlining flight travel and accommodation
10 days prior to surgery	Flight travel and accommodation booked and confirmed
4 to 9 days prior to surgery	General individual and companion preparations for travel and surgery
3 days prior to surgery	Travel to location for surgery
2 days prior to surgery	Arrival in location and travel to accommodation
1 day prior to surgery	Pre-operative assessment
Day zero	Day of surgery

Before you travel

How will the independent provider for mesh removal contact me?

Once your referral has been accepted a representative from your chosen independent provider will contact you. Most communications will be by email. Please make sure that your local consultant has your current email address and up to date phone numbers.

Do I need to bring medication?

If you are on medication, you should bring enough with you for the expected duration of your stay plus an additional seven days supply. The medication should be in its original container with the prescribing instructions printed on the packaging and carried in your hand luggage during the flight. Please also make sure that you have a copy of your prescription with you in case you have to stay longer. Your GP can give you further advice about travelling with any medicines.

Travel checklist

- Passport(s) which must be valid for at least six months beyond the period of intended stay
- Identification for flight to Bristol (if appropriate)
- ESTA completed at least 10 days before departure (USA only)
- Flight and accommodation arrangements confirmed
- Travel insurance confirmed for companion
- Enough of your usual medication
- Unique patient authorisation code in case required in an emergency
- Printed documents relating to your flights and accommodation
- Printed documents that contain information about your mesh removal surgery (copies of such correspondence or confirmation may be required by Customs and Immigration and Passport Control)
- Keep all itemised receipts from any costs you incur so that you can claim these back (**receipts must be itemized and dated, bank statements will not be accepted**)

Arrival

What happens once I get to my destination?

Transport will be organised to meet you at the airport and take you to your accommodation.

What happens before my surgery?

You will have some final pre-operative checks before the surgery. Your independent provider will be able to tell you about these and answer any questions.

Post-surgery

What happens after my surgery?

It's likely that your stay in hospital after the surgery will be up to three days. Following this you may need to return to your accommodation for a number of days until your independent provider clinical team declares you fit to travel. This will depend on the specific surgery you have had and your individual circumstances. This will have been agreed beforehand with the independent

provider.

If, after your surgery, the independent provider decides that you need to stay longer than planned, the mesh co-ordinator will make the necessary changes to your accommodation and travel bookings. You will need to contact them to arrange this using the details at the end of this leaflet.

Will there be any special arrangements for travelling home?

If you're flying to and from your chosen independent provider, the clinical team there will give you a discharge summary letter and/or a Fit to Fly Certificate before your return flight home. This must be carried in your hand luggage and presented to the airline staff if requested. The discharge summary should then be given to your GP upon your return to be uploaded to your medical records.

If needed, the independent provider will give you medication to take which reduces the chance of you developing a deep vein thrombosis (DVT).

Follow-up

Will I have follow-up appointments?

After your surgery you'll have a follow up appointment: These can include:

- a telephone or video call with your surgeon or a specialist nurse if you had your operation in the USA.
- a videocall or face to face meeting with your surgeon or a specialist nurse if you had your operation in Bristol.

Once home following surgery, should there be any immediate concerns or ongoing health care needs related to your surgery, you should contact your GP in the first instance, and be taken care of by your local uro- gynaecological team.

Protecting your personal data

NHS National Services Scotland (NHS NSS) is a public organisation created in Scotland under section 10 of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 (the 1978 Act).

NHS National Services Scotland' is the common name of the Common Services Agency for the Scottish Health Service. We're a health board within NHS Scotland.

Why we use personal information

As an organisation we've been given tasks by the Scottish Government so we can promote and improve the physical and mental health of the people of Scotland and play our part in operating a comprehensive and integrated national health service in Scotland.

These tasks (or functions as they are described in the legislation), are given to us under the 1978 Act and related legislation like the [National Health Service \(Functions of the Common Services Agency\) \(Scotland\) Order 2008](#) (external link) and the [National Health Service \(Functions of the Common Services Agency\) \(Scotland\) Amendment Order 2014](#) (external link).

Along with all health boards within NHS Scotland, we use personal information to:

- support the administration of health and care services
- provide information to other agencies to assist in the prevention and detection of fraud
- conduct research for the improvement of healthcare
- maintain our accounts and records
- We also use personal information to help us fulfil specific tasks that we've been given as an organisation, like administering the Mesh Removal Service

We take care to ensure your personal information is only accessible to authorised people. Our staff have a legal and contractual duty to keep personal health information secure and confidential.

Transferring personal information abroad

We don't routinely transfer personal information to countries outside of the UK without an adequate level of data protection. If it becomes necessary, then the transfer will comply with UK data protection law and the NHS Scotland Information Security Policy.

Useful contacts

To discuss your treatment further, please contact your local clinician.

The NSS mesh co-ordinator is available Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm on **01698 794 400** or nss.nsdmesh@nhs.scot and can assist with travel booking, non-clinical administrative questions and sign posting.

If you are traveling to USA and experience any **unplanned healthcare** issues, please contact Healix International with your details.

+44 20 8763 4807 and select option 2

NHSAssistScotland@healix.com

If you are traveling to Bristol and experience any **travel/accommodation** issues, please contact Corporate Travel Management with your details.

+44 1274 726 424

Information about the Mesh Service in Glasgow can be found on the Specialist Services page in the Specialist Healthcare Services section of the NHS National Services Scotland website:

- <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/complex-mesh-surgical-service>

The **independent providers websites** are:

- <https://www.spirehealthcare.com/spire-bristol-hospital/>
- <https://gynecologicsurgery.com>

For general enquiries about the **treatment pathway** please email **nss.nsdmesh@nhs.scot**

If you require this leaflet in an alternative format please email

NSS.EqualityDiversity@nhs.scot

Telephone **0131 275 6000**

For support with the British sign language, please visit the Contact Scotland BSL website <https://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

To ensure you have the latest version of this leaflet, please visit

<https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/complex-mesh-surgical-service/independent-providers>

The information provided in this leaflet is for guidance, and individual circumstances will be considered as they arise.