The enhanced recovery approach is being introduced in many surgical and emergency specialties with benefits in both reduced length of stay and improved patient experience.

How enhanced recovery can boost patient outcomes

In this article...

- Work of the Enhanced Recovery Partnership
- The principles and benefits of enhanced recovery
- Patients’ role and responsibilities

**Pre-assessment plays a key role in managing risk. Patients are prepared physically and psychologically, and their social circumstances are assessed before admission for surgery. This aims to reduce any unnecessary physical or emotional stress and ensure no “post-operative surprises”. A structured pathway approach ensures that key elements, such as patient education, information, nutrition, pain relief and early mobilisation, are integral parts of the care pathway.**

**The Enhanced Recovery Partnership**

The Enhanced Recovery Partnership (ERP) is a partnership between the Department of Health, NHS Improvement, the National Cancer Action Team, Advancing Quality Alliance, strategic health authorities (SHAs) and networks. It aims to improve the quality of patient experience, outcomes and reduce length of stay within elective care pathways across the NHS by sharing good-practice principles of the ERP pathway (DH, 2010). See Box 1 for resources and tools on ER.

ERP brings together clinical expertise, patient experience, service-improvement expertise and key stakeholders. Future aims for the ERP are to reduce variations in practice for patients and improve outcomes, actively build on clinical experience, evidence and knowledge, and share learning across the NHS to benefit all patients.

The ER pathway is challenging the way nurses deliver care; it is a proactive rather than reactive approach.

A core component of ER is empowering patients to become partners in their care.

Achieving ER involves ensuring the pathway is available to every patient by every nurse and by every clinical team.

Ward managers and senior nurses play a vital role in providing leadership, management and education on ER.

Early mobilisation is a key element of enhanced recovery.