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anna**

## Having an operation after an ABI

This section will tell you all about 'operations'. Remember, not everyone who had an ABI needed an operation. It all depends on your case and what happened to you. Here is what you can find out about:

- **Did I need an operation?**
- **How did the doctors know I needed an operation?**
- **What happened during the operation?**
- **What happens after the operation?**
- **Will I have a scar?**

### Did I need an operation?

You would only have had an operation if the doctors thought you really needed one. It all depends on what happened to your brain. If you had an infection it would be unlikely you needed an operation. If you hurt your head and had a bleed inside your skull, it would have been very likely you needed an operation.

Maybe you damaged the skull very badly, or maybe something went into the brain when you had an accident. If so, you would have had some sort of operation.

Sometimes, the brain can be so badly swollen that you need an operation where the doctors remove a piece of the skull to give the brain more room. The piece of the skull can be put back as soon as the brain swelling goes down.

If you had some other problem with your brain, and needed to have a brain tumour removed or maybe needed a special operation to stop you having epileptic seizures, the doctors would have planned the operation very well before they actually did it.

Ask your family if you had an operation when you had your ABI. They will be able to tell you much more about it and can probably answer lots of questions you might have.

### How did the doctors know I needed an operation?

When you were admitted to hospital, you would have had lots of CT and MRI scans taken. From these pictures, the doctors would have decided whether they needed to operate. They would also check to see how you were doing in intensive care - if you weren't making a





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recovery they might have decided it's because you needed an operation.

## What happened during the operation?

You would have been taken from intensive care to the operating theatre where the surgeons would perform the operation.

You would have been kept unconscious by some medicine called a general anaesthetic. You sometimes hear people say 'you will be put to sleep by having some sleepy medicine'. Don't worry! This is very different from having your cat or dog put to sleep! All it means is that the doctors made sure that you wouldn't remember anything about the operation or won't feel anything!

The surgeons will then have done the operation. Some operations can take a long time, other operations can be quick. You won't remember anything about it.

## What happened after the operation?

After the operation you would have been taken either back to intensive care if you were very sick or taken straight to the ward. It all depends on what operation you had and how poorly you were after having it.

## Will I have a scar?

Yes, it is highly likely you will have some sort of scar. Some scars can be small, and others a bit bigger. This can be upsetting and there are lots of reasons that make people worry about scars. You can read more about body image in the 'Growing up as a teenager with ABI' section.

Try to remember that the operation saved your life. If you hadn't have had the operation you probably would have died. Scars fade over time and there are lots of things you can do to hide your scar. As you get older, you won't mind your scar so much. It becomes part of who you are and where you have been. You will find you don't worry about it so much and the way you feel about it will improve.

