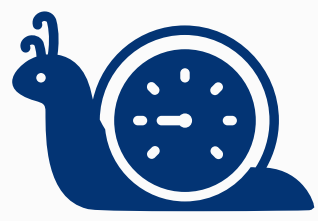


Frailty and Surgery

Frailty is a word used in healthcare that is often **misunderstood**. Frailty means your **recovery** from illness or injury can **take longer or be more difficult**.

It is more common as we age, but younger people can also live with frailty.

People living with frailty might notice...



Feeling slower



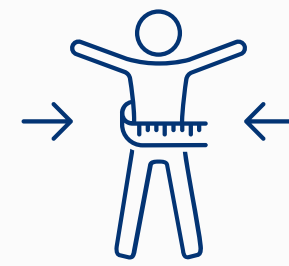
Weakness and muscle loss



Feeling tired



Needing more help with daily tasks like getting dressed



Weight loss without trying



Taking a long time to recover from illness

You may be given a frailty score before surgery using the **Clinical Frailty Scale**[1]. Being given a frailty score may come as a shock. However, knowing about frailty can help you prevent and manage it.

The Clinical Frailty Scale can give you a frailty score. Some examples from the scale are shown below.

Feeling slower

Needing more help around the house

Needing help with bathing

Unlikely to recover from mild illness

5. Mildly frail

Struggling to shop alone

6. Moderately frail

Not leaving the house by yourself

7. Severely frail

Needing help with all personal care



Why does frailty matter?

People **living with frailty** are more likely to:

- Have complications after an operation
- Find it hard to return to normal activities after surgery
- Need more support at home after discharge
- Be discharged to a care home
- Spend longer in hospital

Talking about these risks helps you choose the right treatment for you.

Some people with frailty may decide not to have surgery.

Have an open conversation with your healthcare team about the risks of surgery

What can I do?

Ask for support to:

- Stay active
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Eat a balanced diet
- Stop smoking
- Reduce alcohol intake

Ask your doctor or healthcare team if you're worried about frailty

What can my doctor do?

If you have frailty, you will usually be supported by a team led by a GP or a specialist doctor for older people (geriatrician). They will be able to:

- Offer **support, advice** and **treatment**
- Answer your **questions**

Reference

1. [bgs.org.uk/sites/default/files/content/attachment/2018-07-05/rockwood_cfs.pdf](https://www.bgs.org.uk/sites/default/files/content/attachment/2018-07-05/rockwood_cfs.pdf)

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