

Podcast 115 – Having an Operation in Australia – The Recovery

Learn English while learning about daily life in Australia, with Rob McCormack

Podcast Number 115 – Having an Operation in Australia – The Recovery

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Hi,

In my last podcast (Podcast 114, <https://slowenglish.info/?p=2944>), I talked about my recent experience in preparing to have an operation for my prostate cancer. In this podcast, I would like to talk about my recovery from that operation. While preparing for the operation was important, it was not as important as my recovery. As you can imagine, recovering from an operation is not a pleasant thing. It's not a fun time. However, without the operation and the recovery period, I cannot get well again. So of course, I chose to have the operation and I did everything that I could during my recovery, in order to get well again.

The amazing thing about an operation is that, as a patient, you have no memory of it. I can remember all the events leading up to the time that my anesthetist put me to sleep. Then suddenly I was waking up. In reality about 4 hours had elapsed. I was drowsy and I could hear and see my wife and a nurse near my hospital bed. It's at that point that you realize your recovery has started and that it will not be easy. But you also know that people are there to help you and support you. That's a comforting feeling, but ultimately,

your recovery is up to you. You know it will be hard work but you must do the hard things in order to get well again.

The first thing I noticed was a lot of discomfort and an overwhelming tiredness. I had a very large surgical wound on my stomach where the surgeon had performed the operation. Obviously it was very sore but my pain was being managed by the pain killing drugs I was receiving. I had awoken from the operation in the early evening. I can remember my wife telling me that the surgeon had spoken to her after the operation. He had told her that it was a success and had gone well. Even though I was still very groggy, I knew that was the most important message to hear. Some time after that, my wife left for the evening and I dozed off. The nurse came regularly to check on me. She took my temperature and my blood pressure and checked the amount of pain killing drug I was receiving. She also asked if I would like some ice to suck on, as my mouth was very dry. I said yes and I can remember the cold freshness in my dry mouth. It helped a lot. I can remember noticing the tubes I had attached to my body, to allow me to receive pain killer and to take fluids from my body. In particular, I had a catheter inserted which was removing the urine from my bladder. This had to stay in place for 14 days, to allow my bladder to heal.

That first night passed and soon I was waking to see the morning light coming in through the window blinds. Not long after, the nurse said that I should try to get up out of my bed. This seemed like an impossible task, but early movement is important to speed up your recovery. With the assistance of the nurse, I was able to get out of my bed and walk about 3 steps to sit in a chair next to my bed. I needed all of my strength to do it, but somehow I got there. I didn't stay there long, but making the movement was important. It was very difficult to get back in my bed, as my stomach muscles had no strength and any movement of my legs caused pain. What relief to once again be lying down in my bed. The nurse raised one

end of my bed to allow me to sit up and have something to eat and drink. It was more than 24 hours since I had eaten, although I can't say I was hungry at all. That first day was probably my worst. My wife and son visited and that made me feel better.

The next 3 days went by rather quickly. Each day I could feel myself getting stronger and I managed to eat light meals and drink some apple juice or tea. Also, each day I got up and walked, although very slowly. On the second day after my operation I managed to get out of bed, have a shower and clean my teeth, even with my tubes attached. I also managed to go for a short walk down the hospital corridor. On day 3 I was lucky enough to have two of my motorcycling friends visit me for a short while. When my wife visited me that same day, I was able to go for a longer walk down the corridor with her, and back again. I could tell I was improving. On day 4 after the operation, my surgeon came to see me in the morning and told me that I could go home around 11.00am. While I still felt quite weak and extremely sore, I was keen to get home where I could feel more comfortable.

Once at home, I was able to rest and take short walks, at first just inside the house and then later into the garden. My wife stayed home from work for several days to look after me and she was a wonderful support for me. Finally, 14 days after my operation, my wife took me back to the doctor's surgery. I had the dressing removed from my surgical wound and my catheter was removed. By now I felt much more in control and able to move about freely.

From there my recovery has been steady and pleasing. Every day I went on short walks outside and then down the street and back. These walks became longer as I gained my strength. A healthy diet is critical and it helped me to get my strength back. Most days I have been in contact with my friends on the phone and on several occasions my close friend has me taken in his car for coffee and cake at a local café. I also had

visits from other close friends and this has helped me stay in touch and look forward to getting back to normal life. As I am retired, I did not need to worry about going back to work, but I was most definitely looking forward to riding my motorcycle again. After 6 weeks I visited my doctor again so he could check my progress. He was very pleased with my recovery and told me that, not only could I drive again, but I could also ride my motorcycle again. I was so pleased to hear that. All my hard work had paid off. Needless to say, the very next day I went out on my first motorcycle ride. What a joy to be once more feeling my old self and back in control of my life.



It's great to be riding my motorcycle once again.

I am still amazed that I recovered so quickly from a major operation like this, and it is all thanks to the wonderful surgeon, nurses and hospital staff who are all brilliant. While they have fixed my body, it is my wife, family and friends who have helped bring me back to a normal life, and to them I am eternally grateful. As time goes on, I am hoping further tests will show that I am fully cured from my prostate cancer. In the meantime, I enjoy each day as it comes.

If you have a question or a comment to make, please leave it in the comments box at the bottom of this page. Or, you can send me an email at rob@slowenglish.info. I would love to hear from you. Tell me where you live, a little bit about yourself and what you think of my Slow English podcast. I will write back to you, in English of course. If you would like to take a short quiz to see if you have understood this podcast, you will also find it on my website. Goodbye until next time.

Rob

Podcast 115 Quiz - Did you understand the podcast?

You can take the quiz as many times as you like.

[Start quiz](#)

Vocabulary

anesthetist = a special doctor who puts you to sleep for an operation

assistance = help

bladder = that part of your body which stores urine

blinds = covers for the windows

brilliant = when something or someone is very, very good

catheter = a tube which takes urine from your bladder

corridor = a long area in a building which connects rooms and areas

critical = important

cured = (here) when a disease has gone from your body

definitely = when you are very certain about something

discomfort = when something does not feel nice

dozed = to fall asleep, although not a deep sleep

dressing = a cover over a surgical wound

drowsy = sleepy

elapsed = time has gone by

eternally grateful = thankful

extremely = very

fluids = liquids, for example, water, urine

gained = improved, to get more of something

groggy = feeling sleepy, usually not in a good way

in contact = to talk to someone

in control = when you can make the decisions about what will happen

muscles = parts of the body which allow you to move

needless to say = when something is obvious and expected

occasions = the time when something happens

operation = (here) when a doctor uses instruments to cut into your body, in order to fix something making you sick

overwhelming = (here) when a feeling is very strong

performed = done

pleasant = something which is nice to experience,

recent = in the near past

recovery = to get back to full health, get back to full strength

retired = when you are no longer working, usually because you are 65 years or older

sore = when something hurts you, but generally not strongly

steady = at one level

support = help

surgeon = a doctor with special skills who can perform an operation

surgery = (here) a place where a doctor works and sees his/her patients

surgical wound = the place where a doctor cuts into your body as part of an operation.

ultimately = finally