# Precision Upper GI Surgery - User Journey Mapping

## Overview

This user journey map outlines the complete patient experience from initial symptom awareness through post-operative care, identifying key touchpoints, emotional states, pain points, and opportunities for engagement.

## Patient Journey Stages

### Stage 1: Symptom Awareness and Initial Concern

\*\*Duration:\*\* 1-6 months

\*\*Emotional State:\*\* Worry, confusion, hope for simple solution

#### Patient Experience

* \*\*Trigger Events:\*\*
* Persistent heartburn or acid reflux
* Difficulty swallowing (dysphagia)
* Abdominal pain or discomfort
* Weight loss or changes in appetite
* Recommendation from family/friends
* \*\*Patient Actions:\*\*
* Initial Google searches for symptoms
* Self-diagnosis attempts
* Trying over-the-counter remedies
* Discussing symptoms with family/friends
* Delaying medical consultation due to busy schedule or fear
* \*\*Information Needs:\*\*
* "What do these symptoms mean?"
* "When should I see a doctor?"
* "Are my symptoms serious?"
* "What are the treatment options?"
* "Can this be treated without surgery?"
* \*\*Digital Touchpoints:\*\*
* General symptom search engines
* Health websites (WebMD, Healthline)
* Forums and patient communities
* Social media health groups
* GP practice websites

#### Pain Points

* Information overload and conflicting advice online
* Difficulty distinguishing reliable sources
* Fear and anxiety about potential serious conditions
* Reluctance to "bother" healthcare providers
* Cost concerns about medical consultations

#### Opportunities

* \*\*SEO Content:\*\* Symptom explanation articles
* \*\*Educational Resources:\*\* "When to see a specialist" guides
* \*\*Reassuring Messaging:\*\* Addressing common fears and concerns
* \*\*Local Content:\*\* Sydney-specific healthcare navigation
* \*\*Community Engagement:\*\* Health awareness events

### Stage 2: General Practitioner Consultation

\*\*Duration:\*\* 1-4 weeks

\*\*Emotional State:\*\* Relief to seek help, anxiety about findings

#### Patient Experience

* \*\*Trigger Events:\*\*
* Symptoms persist or worsen
* Family pressure to see doctor
* Annual health check-up
* Medication ineffectiveness
* Work/life impact of symptoms
* \*\*Patient Actions:\*\*
* Booking GP appointment
* Preparing symptom description
* Undergoing initial examination
* Blood tests or basic investigations
* Receiving referral to specialist
* \*\*Information Needs:\*\*
* "What tests do I need?"
* "How long will diagnosis take?"
* "What specialist do I need to see?"
* "How do I choose a good surgeon?"
* "What should I prepare for consultation?"
* \*\*Digital Touchpoints:\*\*
* GP practice information systems
* Test result portals
* Specialist referral information
* Health insurance websites
* Hospital/clinic websites

#### Pain Points

* Waiting times for appointments
* Limited consultation time with GP
* Uncertainty about referral process
* Insurance coverage questions
* Anxiety about specialist costs

#### Opportunities

* \*\*GP Relationship Building:\*\* Professional referral materials
* \*\*Patient Education:\*\* Referral preparation guides
* \*\*Insurance Information:\*\* Coverage and billing transparency
* \*\*Appointment Coordination:\*\* Streamlined booking process
* \*\*Pre-consultation Resources:\*\* What to expect guides

### Stage 3: Specialist Research and Selection

\*\*Duration:\*\* 1-3 weeks

\*\*Emotional State:\*\* Determination to find best care, information overload

#### Patient Experience

* \*\*Trigger Events:\*\*
* Receiving specialist referral
* Insurance approval confirmation
* GP recommendation discussion
* Online research initiation
* Family/friend recommendations
* \*\*Patient Actions:\*\*
* Researching referred specialist
* Comparing multiple surgeons
* Reading patient reviews
* Checking credentials and experience
* Seeking second opinions
* \*\*Information Needs:\*\*
* "Is this surgeon experienced with my condition?"
* "What are their success rates?"
* "What do other patients say?"
* "Where do they operate?"
* "What surgical techniques do they use?"
* \*\*Digital Touchpoints:\*\*
* Surgeon websites and profiles
* Hospital affiliation information
* Patient review platforms
* Medical board registration checks
* Professional association directories

#### Pain Points

* Overwhelming choice of specialists
* Difficulty comparing qualifications
* Limited availability for consultations
* Conflicting online reviews
* Pressure to make quick decision

#### Opportunities

* \*\*Professional Website:\*\* Comprehensive surgeon profile and credentials
* \*\*Patient Testimonials:\*\* Verified patient stories and outcomes
* \*\*Procedure Information:\*\* Detailed surgical technique explanations
* \*\*Accessibility:\*\* Easy contact and appointment booking
* \*\*Educational Content:\*\* Comparison guides for choosing surgeons

### Stage 4: Initial Consultation and Diagnosis

\*\*Duration:\*\* 1-2 weeks

\*\*Emotional State:\*\* Nervous anticipation, hope for clarity

#### Patient Experience

* \*\*Trigger Events:\*\*
* Scheduled consultation appointment
* Medical records preparation
* Family support coordination
* Work schedule adjustment
* Transportation planning
* \*\*Patient Actions:\*\*
* Attending consultation appointment
* Undergoing physical examination
* Discussing symptoms and history
* Receiving diagnostic tests
* Learning about treatment options
* \*\*Information Needs:\*\*
* "What exactly is wrong with me?"
* "What are my treatment options?"
* "Do I definitely need surgery?"
* "What are the risks and benefits?"
* "How long is the recovery?"
* \*\*Physical Touchpoints:\*\*
* Clinic reception and environment
* Consultation room experience
* Staff interaction quality
* Examination process
* Information materials provided

#### Pain Points

* Anxiety about diagnosis confirmation
* Complex medical terminology
* Information overload in consultation
* Limited time for questions
* Uncertainty about next steps

#### Opportunities

* \*\*Consultation Experience:\*\* Comfortable, professional environment
* \*\*Clear Communication:\*\* Plain English explanations
* \*\*Take-home Materials:\*\* Written information packets
* \*\*Follow-up Support:\*\* Post-consultation question answering
* \*\*Family Involvement:\*\* Including support persons in discussions

### Stage 5: Treatment Decision Making

\*\*Duration:\*\* 1-4 weeks

\*\*Emotional State:\*\* Weighing options, seeking reassurance

#### Patient Experience

* \*\*Trigger Events:\*\*
* Diagnosis confirmation
* Treatment options presentation
* Second opinion consideration
* Family discussion involvement
* Insurance coverage verification
* \*\*Patient Actions:\*\*
* Researching surgical procedures
* Discussing with family/friends
* Seeking second opinions
* Considering alternative treatments
* Making treatment decision
* \*\*Information Needs:\*\*
* "What happens during surgery?"
* "What are the success rates?"
* "What complications could occur?"
* "How long will I be off work?"
* "What's involved in recovery?"
* \*\*Digital Touchpoints:\*\*
* Procedure information resources
* Patient education videos
* Recovery timeline guides
* Support group forums
* Insurance coverage verification

#### Pain Points

* Fear of surgical risks
* Uncertainty about outcomes
* Work and family impact concerns
* Financial considerations
* Pressure from family/friends

#### Opportunities

* \*\*Comprehensive Education:\*\* Detailed procedure explanations
* \*\*Risk Communication:\*\* Balanced risk and benefit discussion
* \*\*Patient Stories:\*\* Recovery experiences and outcomes
* \*\*Support Resources:\*\* Pre-operative preparation guides
* \*\*Decision Tools:\*\* Treatment option comparison resources

### Stage 6: Pre-Operative Preparation

\*\*Duration:\*\* 2-6 weeks

\*\*Emotional State:\*\* Committed but anxious, preparation focus

#### Patient Experience

* \*\*Trigger Events:\*\*
* Surgery scheduling confirmation
* Pre-operative testing requirements
* Work leave arrangements
* Family support coordination
* Home preparation needs
* \*\*Patient Actions:\*\*
* Scheduling surgery date
* Completing pre-operative tests
* Following preparation instructions
* Arranging support systems
* Preparing home environment
* \*\*Information Needs:\*\*
* "What tests do I need before surgery?"
* "How should I prepare at home?"
* "What can I eat before surgery?"
* "What should I arrange for recovery?"
* "Who can help me during recovery?"
* \*\*Touchpoints:\*\*
* Pre-operative clinic visits
* Anaesthetist consultations
* Hospital pre-admission processes
* Nursing staff interactions
* Administrative coordination

#### Pain Points

* Complex preparation requirements
* Multiple appointment coordination
* Anxiety about surgery approaching
* Work and family arrangement stress
* Insurance and billing concerns

#### Opportunities

* \*\*Preparation Checklists:\*\* Step-by-step pre-operative guides
* \*\*Coordination Support:\*\* Streamlined appointment scheduling
* \*\*Anxiety Management:\*\* Relaxation and preparation techniques
* \*\*Family Resources:\*\* Support person guidance
* \*\*Administrative Support:\*\* Insurance and billing assistance

### Stage 7: Surgery and Immediate Recovery

\*\*Duration:\*\* 1-7 days

\*\*Emotional State:\*\* Anxiety transitioning to relief, physical discomfort

#### Patient Experience

* \*\*Trigger Events:\*\*
* Hospital admission
* Surgery performance
* Initial recovery period
* Pain management
* Discharge planning
* \*\*Patient Actions:\*\*
* Hospital admission procedures
* Surgery preparation and performance
* Initial recovery monitoring
* Pain management coordination
* Discharge preparation
* \*\*Information Needs:\*\*
* "How did the surgery go?"
* "What should I expect during recovery?"
* "How do I manage pain?"
* "When can I go home?"
* "What are the warning signs?"
* \*\*Physical Touchpoints:\*\*
* Hospital environment and staff
* Surgery and recovery rooms
* Nursing care quality
* Pain management protocols
* Discharge coordination

#### Pain Points

* Surgery anxiety and discomfort
* Pain management challenges
* Hospital environment adjustment
* Communication with multiple staff
* Discharge timing uncertainty

#### Opportunities

* \*\*Hospital Partnership:\*\* Excellent care coordination
* \*\*Pain Management:\*\* Effective comfort protocols
* \*\*Communication:\*\* Regular updates for family
* \*\*Discharge Planning:\*\* Clear home care instructions
* \*\*Immediate Support:\*\* 24/7 contact availability

### Stage 8: Post-Operative Recovery and Follow-up

\*\*Duration:\*\* 2-12 weeks

\*\*Emotional State:\*\* Recovery optimism, occasional concern about healing

#### Patient Experience

* \*\*Trigger Events:\*\*
* Home recovery initiation
* Follow-up appointments
* Return to normal activities
* Work return preparation
* Long-term outcome assessment
* \*\*Patient Actions:\*\*
* Following discharge instructions
* Managing recovery activities
* Attending follow-up appointments
* Gradually returning to normal life
* Monitoring healing progress
* \*\*Information Needs:\*\*
* "Is my recovery progressing normally?"
* "When can I return to work?"
* "What activities can I resume?"
* "What symptoms should concern me?"
* "How do I maintain good health long-term?"
* \*\*Touchpoints:\*\*
* Home recovery environment
* Follow-up clinic visits
* Nursing support calls
* Online recovery resources
* Patient community connections

#### Pain Points

* Recovery timeline uncertainty
* Activity restriction frustrations
* Concern about healing progress
* Work return timing pressure
* Long-term lifestyle adjustments

#### Opportunities

* \*\*Recovery Guidance:\*\* Detailed timeline and milestone resources
* \*\*Progress Monitoring:\*\* Regular check-in systems
* \*\*Activity Guidelines:\*\* Safe return to normal life planning
* \*\*Support Networks:\*\* Patient recovery communities
* \*\*Long-term Health:\*\* Maintenance and prevention education

### Stage 9: Long-term Wellness and Relationship

\*\*Duration:\*\* Ongoing

\*\*Emotional State:\*\* Gratitude, confidence in health management

#### Patient Experience

* \*\*Trigger Events:\*\*
* Complete recovery achievement
* Annual health check-ups
* Preventive care scheduling
* Lifestyle modification success
* Referral to other patients
* \*\*Patient Actions:\*\*
* Maintaining healthy lifestyle
* Attending regular follow-ups
* Recommending surgeon to others
* Participating in patient testimonials
* Engaging with practice community
* \*\*Information Needs:\*\*
* "How do I maintain my health?"
* "What warning signs should I watch for?"
* "When should I schedule check-ups?"
* "How can I help other patients?"
* "What new treatments are available?"
* \*\*Touchpoints:\*\*
* Annual follow-up appointments
* Educational newsletters
* Patient success stories
* Referral coordination
* Community health events

#### Pain Points

* Complacency about health maintenance
* Infrequent contact with practice
* Limited engagement opportunities
* Uncertainty about long-term care needs

#### Opportunities

* \*\*Ongoing Relationship:\*\* Regular health maintenance programs
* \*\*Patient Community:\*\* Alumni networks and support systems
* \*\*Referral Programs:\*\* Patient advocacy and recommendation systems
* \*\*Educational Content:\*\* Long-term health and wellness resources
* \*\*Practice Loyalty:\*\* Continuing care and family member referrals

## Journey Mapping Insights

### Critical Success Factors

1. \*\*Information Accessibility:\*\* Clear, comprehensive educational resources at each stage

2. \*\*Emotional Support:\*\* Addressing anxiety and concerns throughout the journey

3. \*\*Communication Excellence:\*\* Regular, clear updates and availability

4. \*\*Coordination Efficiency:\*\* Streamlined processes and reduced administrative burden

5. \*\*Outcome Transparency:\*\* Honest discussion of expectations and results

### Key Opportunities for Enhancement

1. \*\*Digital Integration:\*\* Seamless online experience supporting each journey stage

2. \*\*Cultural Sensitivity:\*\* Inclusive approach for Sydney's diverse population

3. \*\*Family Involvement:\*\* Supporting patient advocates and decision-makers

4. \*\*Preventive Education:\*\* Long-term health maintenance and lifestyle guidance

5. \*\*Community Building:\*\* Patient networks and ongoing engagement opportunities

This comprehensive user journey mapping provides the foundation for patient-centered content strategy and experience optimization across all touchpoints with Precision Upper GI Surgery.