

## Patient Information

# Pre and Post - Operative advice for Wide Excision and Sentinel Lymph Node Biopsy

It has been arranged for you to have your operation as a **day case**.

**Your next appointment will be with your Breast Clinical Nurse**

**Specialist in the Breast Unit (B3) on:** .....

**with** .....

**The following information is to aid your recovery in the first two weeks after your operation.**

### **Pain and discomfort**

It is important to take pain relief, e.g. paracetamol, regularly for the first 1 to 2 weeks and continue to take this until your arm and breast are no longer painful.

Pain relief will allow you to move more freely and without discomfort. It will help during your arm exercises and give you a better night's sleep.

If you experience constipation, drink plenty of fluids, increase your fibre intake and consider a gentle laxative which can be purchased from your local pharmacist.

### **Your wound**

Your wounds will be covered by a **splash proof dressing** or **surgical glue**.

Please keep your dressing (or glue) as dry as possible. You may have a shallow bath or waist high shower and wash around the dressing. You may notice fine threads of stitch at the end of your wounds, **do not pull on these**; they will be trimmed in the breast clinic.

You may notice some blue staining on your breast, this is normal and will fade over time.

You may also see some pink stain on your skin, which is the antiseptic that is applied in theatre. This may be washed away using soap and water, when you are ready.

## Bra

Wearing a soft, supportive, non-wired bra, or crop top, day and night, is advised for the first 2 to 3 weeks following your operation. This will give support to your wound and reduce bruising.

## Care of your arm

Please use your affected arm as normally as possible but avoid lifting anything too heavy. A small kettle or weight, no heavier than a bag of sugar (approx.2lbs or 1 kg) is enough for the first 2-3 weeks.

Avoid having injections, blood or blood pressure taken from your affected arm. We advise you not to drive for at least 1 to 2 weeks.

## Arm exercises

Your Breast Clinical Nurse Specialist will give you a sheet of exercises from Breast Cancer Now (**Exercises after breast cancer surgery BCC6**) and we advise you to start them the day after your operation. Please complete the exercises numbered 1 to 6, three times per day for the first week. You can also download an audio version of the exercises on the Breast Cancer Now website, in the publications section [www.breastcancer.org/information-support](http://www.breastcancer.org/information-support) should you wish.

## Bleeding/fluid collection

On **rare** occasions fluid can collect in the breast or armpit wound. This is not worrying. Your wound will be checked at your next outpatient appointment and fluid can be removed then if necessary.

If you think you may have signs of infection i.e. a raised temperature, discharge from or redness to the wound, please do contact your Breast Clinical Nurse Specialist or on call GP (if out of hours). If antibiotics are required they will be prescribed.

## Activity

It is normal to feel tired and low in energy for a few weeks.

We encourage you to be doing small amounts of regular activity in the day, e.g. short walks, but to also have periods of rest.

## Advice to improve blood flow and reduce the risk of blood clots

Continue to wear your anti embolic stockings day and night until you have returned to your normal level of activity. Please ensure that the stockings do not roll down your leg, as they may become too tight and restrict the blood flow.

When sitting or lying down, try moving your feet up and down quickly (pumping action) 10 times. Keep your knees straight during the exercise, in order to stretch your calf muscles and try to repeat this 2 to 3 times every hour.

Also, take several deep breaths each hour to keep your lungs clear.

## Eating and drinking

Please drink plenty of fluids and have regular small meals/snacks until your appetite returns. Eating a varied diet with plenty of protein, vegetables and fruit will help with wound healing and your recovery.

## Follow up care appointment

You will be given a follow up appointment to see your surgeon in the Breast Unit about 10 to 13 days after your operation. This is to discuss the findings from under microscope (pathology) and to have your wound checked.

## Contact details

**Breast Clinical Nurse Specialists** 01225 824057(answerphone) Hours of work 8am-6pm. Email [ruh-tr.breastcarenurses@nhs.net](mailto:ruh-tr.breastcarenurses@nhs.net)

**Breast Unit reception** 01225 825881 or 825882

**Charlotte ward (D9)** 01225 824434 or 821082

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