

## **Advice for Patients Leaving Hospital Following Breast Surgery**

You can expect some swelling or bruising at the wound site(s) this is not unusual. There will be some discomfort and tenderness where the cut(s) have been made.

However, if you experience any of the following problems within the first week you should seek medical advice. Please see contact details below:

- Bleeding from the wound that soaks the dressing (the odd spot of blood is to be expected).
- Feeling generally unwell with a raised temperature.
- The wound is red and swollen or hot to touch.
- Discharge from the wound.

### **Dressing removal**

A waterproof dressing usually covers the wound; there will be no visible stitches as they are dissolvable. There may be paper strips visible to seal the edges of the skin together. Both paper strips and the waterproof dressing should be removed 10-14 days after surgery. If you do not wish to do this yourself, please make an appointment with your practice nurse at your GP surgery.

A pressure dressing may also be applied on top of the first dressing. The ward staff will advise you to remove this usually after 24 hours. A spare dressing will be supplied in case the dressing covering the wound is accidentally removed with the pressure dressing. Please inform us if you have any allergies to dressings. You may also have a corset to act as a pressure dressing to wear for approximately 24-48 hours or until no longer comfortable.

### **PICO dressings**

Your consultant may have decided to use this specific dressing following your surgery to reduce risk of healing complications. You will be given specific information regarding this by your breast care nurse.

### **Drain removal**

If you have a drain in place after surgery the ward staff will arrange a district nurse to visit you at home. A separate information sheet 'care of breast drains' will be provided if you need this before you are discharged. Any equipment required for drain care will be supplied by the ward.

### **Fluid collection at the wound site(s)**

Many people who have had breast surgery and/ or lymph node removal experience fullness and swelling under the arm and or in the breast area. This is due to a collection of fluid called a seroma. The build up of fluid may cause

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some discomfort but is not a cause for concern. The fluid is usually absorbed by the body over time. If the seroma is large, causes discomfort and restricts arm movement the fluid can be drawn off. Please contact your breast care nurse if you need to discuss this.

### **Outpatient Follow Up**

We aim to see you in clinic about 3-4 weeks after your operation to discuss your results and any further treatment which may be recommended for you.

### **Contact Numbers**

If you have any concerns following surgery please contact the

Specialist Breast Care Nurses:

Tel 01603 286732 (Symptomatic Team)

Tel 01603 286728 (Breast Screening Team)

At weekends, bank holidays and evenings please contact your GP out of hour's service.

