

Important

If you have any other concerns, please contact the breast care nurses on telephone 01623 622515, extension 3884 (Monday to Friday between 9am to 4pm). Please leave a message we aim to get back to you within 24-48 hours. Outside of these hours or if you require more urgent help/advice at any time please:

- Make an emergency appointment at your local GP surgery.
- Attend your local Emergency Department,
- Call NHS 111.

Contact the breast care nurses or ring NHS 111 if you have any signs of infection. These may include redness around the area, skin that feels very hot, strong pain, or feeling feverish or like you have the flu.

There is a risk of a deep vein thrombosis (usually called a DVT or blood clot) following surgery. If you notice swelling in any of your limbs following the operation, you will need to attend your nearest Emergency Department.

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Breast surgery aftercare

This leaflet gives you information and advice following your breast surgery. The aim is to help you get back to full health as quickly as possible.

You are more likely to have the best outcome if you are eating and drinking, getting out of bed and doing the physiotherapy exercises. Doing these things will help speed your recovery and make complications from surgery less likely.

Please arrange for a family member or friend to pick you up after your surgery and to stay with you for 24 hours afterwards.

Pain control

You may be sent home with a morphine-based painkiller. Most patients manage with just paracetamol and ibuprofen. Please be aware that some painkillers can cause constipation so keep a track of your bowel movements and drink plenty of fluids.

Wound management

Most surgeons will use glue and paper stitches or a dressing to cover the wound. Inside there will be dissolving stitches.

Please keep the wound as clean and dry as possible. You may see a small amount of discharge on the dressing; this is normal. If the discharge is smelly, bright red or causing irritation you should contact the breast nurses or NHS 111.

Drains

If you have a drain, please see the drain advice leaflet provided when discharged from the ward.

Remember to empty the drain at the same time every day and call us when the drain amount in 24 hours is 50mls or less. We will remove it when the drainage amount and colour has reached a level we are happy with.

Exercise and mobility

Take it steady and do not push yourself. Try gentle exercise like walking to improve mobility and strength. This will help avoid constipation and reduce risk of blood clots. You can remove your TED stockings once mobile unless told otherwise.

Do not:

- Lift any heavy items for at least six to eight weeks after surgery.
- Resume sporting activities, gym work, advanced yoga/Pilates, running or Zumba for at least six weeks.

You can resume sexual activity as soon as you feel able, but give yourself time and do not expect too much.

Support bra

It is important to wear a supportive non-wired bra for at least the first two weeks after your operation. You will also need to wear it when sleeping. This helps with swelling/pain/shape of the breast as it is healing. If you have had a mastectomy, you will be given a soft breast form to wear in your bra.

Results

Your appointment will be made three weeks from surgery; this may be moved if the results are not ready.

Driving

You are advised not to drive until you have been seen in the results clinic and been cleared to drive. You should be confident that you can do an emergency stop and have checked with your insurance company.

Seroma

Some people experience swelling under the arm or around the surgery site. This is due to a collection of fluid called a seroma. The fluid is not a cause for concern, and it is usually reabsorbed by the body over time. However, if the seroma is large, causes discomfort, restricts arm movement, is pulling on the scar or does not go away, please contact the breast nurses for advice.

Showering/bathing

If you have dressings, you will need to cover them, so they do not get too wet.

Keep your wound and surrounding skin clean by washing with clean warm water and non-perfumed or gentle soap. Don't submerge your wound under water. Gently pat your wound dry with a clean towel or kitchen roll.

Do not use sprays, deodorant, perfumes or talcum powder and avoid shaving until your wound is completely healed.