

- Your breast feels abnormally hot to touch
- The wounds appears red or swollen
- If you are looking pale or are feeling faint please see medical help immediately.

Please seek immediate medical attention if you have any of the above. During office hours Monday to Friday contact your breast care nurse. Out of hours contact your GP. If your GP is not available go to your nearest A&E dept.

Please contact your specialist breast care nurse; either:

Vivienne Maidens 020 7288 5147
mobile 07920236824
Sylvia Grieve 020 72883286
mobile 07867 372712 and leave a message if your call cannot be taken.

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Usually there is not too much pain following this operation, but please do not hesitate to take the medication that you will have been given as per the instructions on the box. Be careful not to exceed the stated dose. You can return to normal activities as soon as you feel able to. You can shower after 24 hours but do not lie down and soak the Steristrips in the bath.

The Steristrips can be removed 10-14 days following your surgical operation either by yourself or at your follow up appointment. The stitches underneath will dissolve in about 14 days. You will be given a follow up appointment before you go home. At this appointment your wound healing will be checked and the results of the surgery will be discussed. At this time we will also discuss further treatment and the recommendations of the multi disciplinary team (MDT). The MDT is made up of health professionals and administrators who are experts in their field. They will explore the best treatment options for you so that your journey with us will be as smooth as possible. You may bring a relative or a friend with you if you wish.


What to look out for:

- Excessive or continuous pain.
- You have any discharge or oozing from the wound.
- For bleeding, apply pressure using a clean towel and seek help immediately
- You feel feverish

Going for breast surgery

A patient's guide



.... caring for you 

This information is for patients who are having breast surgery. It explains the reasons for having the surgery and what it involves.

The usual reasons for having surgery:

- To remove a lump confirmed as breast cancer
- To remove any lymph nodes in the armpit
- Mastectomy i.e. removal of the whole breast
- Removal of a benign (non-cancerous) lump or breast ducts

What preparation do you need?

Pre-assessment

You will have a pre assessment (medical check-up) with a nurse or doctor before your operation; this may include some or all of the following: your medical history, a blood test, your blood pressure, your height and weight and a chest X-ray. Please make a list of anything you want to discuss about the operation with the nurse.

Please tell the nurse if you any have medical problems, i.e. heart problems, high blood pressure, diabetes or allergies. Also bring a list of any medications you are taking and tell the nurse if you are on Warfarin ,Aspirin or, Clopidogrel

Please note: if you do not attend the pre-assessment the operation cannot go ahead. On occasion the junior doctor may be able to do the assessment.

You will usually have a general anaesthetic and you may stay in hospital over night. (Sometimes the operation can be performed under local anaesthetic). **You should discuss this with your consultant surgeon.**

On the day of your operation

Please do not **eat** anything for six hours before your operation and do not **drink** anything for four hours before your operation. This is to ensure that your stomach is empty when you are given general anaesthesia. You should arrive at the Day Treatment Centre on time.

Your surgeon and breast care nurse will see you before the operation. They will discuss the operation again with you, before you are asked to sign a consent form to confirm that you understand the procedure and agree to go ahead with it. Your anaesthetist will also see you and explain the procedure.

Please ask any questions you want to.

After the operation

The tissue from the operation will be sent to the pathology laboratory for testing. Usually dissolvable stitches are used under the skin and the incision closed with paper strips (Steristrips) There is usually no other dressing.

You will recover from the anaesthesia in the Day Treatment Centre over a period of two to - three hours. You will be offered a snack and a hot or cold drink once you feel like it. You can go home once you have fully recovered and you have been checked by the nurse and/or the doctor.

You may have a small drain (a tube) in the wound to allow fluid to escape. It is not always necessary for you stay in the hospital just because of the drain. The breast care nurse will explain how to look after this when you go home with your drain along with written instructions. You will be given a copy of a very brief letter to your GP, along with any medication such as those for pain relief and/or antibiotics and you will be given a follow up appointment if you do not already have one.

Going home

Please make sure you have a responsible person to take you home and stay with you for 24 hours after your surgery. Do not drink alcohol, drive, operate machinery (including kettles and cookers) or make important decisions for at least 24 hours after your operation to allow the anaesthetic to wear off.

Do not drive a car until you are certain of being able wear a seat belt and make an emergency stop.