



Breast lump surgery: aftercare advice

Information for patients from Day Surgery

You have had surgery to remove a lump from your breast. The following leaflet explains the following.

- What you should and should not do when you return home.
- How to control any pain.
- How to care for your wound.
- When you can resume your normal activities, such as work and driving.
- Who to contact if you have any questions.

We hope this leaflet answers some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of your healthcare team.

When you get home and for the first few days after your surgery

- Arrange for someone to collect you from hospital and look after you for the first 24 hours.
- You must rest for 24 to 48 hours after your operation.
- If you had a general anaesthetic, for the first 24 hours after your operation:
 - do not drink alcohol
 - do not smoke
 - do not take sleeping tablets.
- If you had a general anaesthetic, for 24 to 48 hours after your operation:
 - do not drive
 - do not cook
 - do not operate any machinery.

- If you usually wear a bra, wear a soft-cup non-wired bra. Do not wear an underwire bra while your wound area heals. This is for comfort and to reduce irritation to your wound area.
- When diagnosed, all cancer patients are allocated a breast care nurse.

How do I control my pain?

- We **may** give you painkillers to take home with you. When you feel pain, take these according to the instructions on the label.
- If you continue to feel pain after taking these painkillers, please contact one of the Day Surgery Centres. You will find their phone numbers at the end of this leaflet.

How do I care for my wound?

- After surgery, you may have a small tube (called a redivac drain) coming from your wound. This tube will drain away any bloodstained fluid that may collect there. This is usually removed before you go home. If you go home with this drain still in place, we will arrange for a district nurse to contact you to arrange a time for them to remove it.
- Your stitches are dissolvable and do not need to be removed.
- You may have a bath or shower, but you must keep your wound area dry for 5 days.

Can I eat and drink as normal after my surgery?

Yes, you can drink and eat when you get home, as long as you do not feel sick. Start with drinks and a light snack. If you feel thirsty, drink as much as you need. Do not drink alcohol.

When can I return to work?

This depends on the work you do. We usually recommend you do not work for 1 to 2 weeks. Your surgeon will advise you about this before your surgery. If you are unsure, please contact Day Surgery.

If you have a manual or heavy job, speak to your GP and discuss your return to work with them.

When can I drive again?

Please check with Day Surgery as to when you can drive again after your surgery.

How will I feel afterwards?

The following can happen but they are not usual.

- A small collection of fluid might appear around the area where the tube drain was.
- There may be some bruising and swelling around your wound.

- If you develop a painful lump near or around your wound, contact one of the Day Surgery Centres. The nurse on duty should be able to arrange for one of the doctors to see you.
 - Canterbury Day Surgery Centre, **Kent and Canterbury Hospital**, Canterbury
Telephone: 01227 783114 (7am to 8pm)
 - Day Surgery, **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital**, Margate
Telephone: 01843 234499 (Monday to Friday 7am to 9pm)
Telephone: 07887 651162 (Monday to Friday 9pm to 7am) (Bank Holidays and weekends, 24 hours a day)
 - Channel Day Surgery, **William Harvey Hospital**, Ashford
Telephone: 01233 616263 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

Please let us know:

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

You can let us know this by:

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net).

Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient information leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

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