

# Breast lump surgery: aftercare advice

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## Information for patients

You have had surgery to remove a lump from your breast. The following explains what you should do when you get home to look after yourself and your wound.

### 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 have had a general anaesthetic, avoid drinking alcohol, smoking, or taking sleeping tablets for 24 hours after your operation.
- If you have had a general anaesthetic, do not drive, cook, or operate any machinery for 24 to 48 hours after your operation.
- We advise you to wear soft-cup non-wired bras. This is for comfort and to reduce irritation to your wound area.
- All cancer patients are allocated a breast care nurse when they are diagnosed.

### How do I control my pain?

- You **may** have been given 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 listed 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 blood stained fluid that may collect there. This is usually removed before you go home. However, 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.
- 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 five 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 one to two weeks. Your breast care nurse will have advised you about this before your surgery. If you have a manual or heavy job we suggest you speak to your GP and discuss your return to work with them.

## When can I drive again?

Please speak to your breast care nurse, they will advise you 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 or your breast care nurse. The nurse on duty should be able to arrange for one of the doctors to see you on the ward.

If you have any queries or concerns (especially if you are getting increasing pain after 48 hours), please contact one of the Day Surgery Centres (listed below), your breast care nurse, or your GP.

- Channel Day Surgery, **William Harvey Hospital**, Ashford  
Telephone: 01233 61 62 63 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- Canterbury Day Surgery Centre, **Kent and Canterbury Hospital**  
Telephone: 01227 78 31 14 (7:30am to 8pm)  
Telephone: 07887 68 76 45 (8pm to 7:30am)
- Day Surgery Unit, **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital**, Margate  
Telephone: 01843 23 44 99 (7:30am to 8pm)  
Telephone: 07887 65 11 62 (8pm to 7:30am)

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments** please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 783145, or email [ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Further patient leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site [www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patientinformation](http://www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patientinformation)