

Aftercare advice for Mr Charalambous' breast cancer patients

Information for breast cancer patients

This leaflet aims to give you advice following your breast surgery, about how to look after yourself and your wound at home.

You must have an adult with you for the first 24 hours after you leave hospital. They will be able to help you with your needs, as required.

What if I have been discharged with a drain?

- When you are discharged from hospital, your ward nurse will arrange for a district nurse to visit you at home to check your wound and drain.
- Drains are left in for different amounts of time depending on the operation you have had. Generally drains are removed five days after your surgery. If you have had breast reconstruction, the drains will be removed in the hospital clinic by a member of the breast care team.

How do I look after my wound/dressing at home?

- The stitches used are dissolvable and may take between six to eight weeks to dissolve.
- Your wound is covered by a water resistant dressing. This means the dressing will keep the surgery site dry when you have a shower. Showering is ideal, gently dry the area afterward. If you only have a bath, avoid soaking the surgery site in the bath for at least three weeks.
- It is advised that you remove the dressing 10 to 14 days after your operation (either remove it yourself or make an appointment with your GP practice nurse).



- Under the main dressing, you may have a layer of small white tapes across your wound; this tape is called steristrips. This tape can be removed 14 days after your surgery.
- No replacement dressings are usually needed once the dressing and steristrips have been removed.

When should I start my exercises?

Aim to try to move your arm normally after your operation. If you have been given an exercise leaflet, you can start your exercises as soon as you feel able after your operation.

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

We usually review patients around three weeks after surgery to discuss their results and check their surgery site.

What if I have any concerns or questions when I return home?

If you have any queries or concerns, please contact the Cancer Care Line on 01227 86 86 66 and ask to speak to your Breast Clinical Nurse Specialist, Monday to Friday (except Bank Holidays).

If you have an urgent concern that cannot wait until the morning, please go to your nearest Emergency Department (preferably at Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital, Margate).

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in 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 had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation