

# Going home after minor breast surgery

(including wide local excision, excision  
biopsy, ductal surgery)

## How long do I need to keep my wound dressing in place for?

You should remove the wound dressing 48 hours after surgery.

## Can I shower/wash as normal?

You can shower as normal but you should not soak the wound until it is completely healed.

## Do I need to have stitches (sutures) removed?

The stitches in the wound are dissolvable and so will not need removal. You will have 'steri strips' covering the wound. These can be safely removed five-seven days after your operation.

## How should the wound look and feel?

Bruising and swelling are expected following surgery. This will resolve but may take some weeks. If you are concerned about bruising or swelling, or it increases, you should either contact the Macmillan Breast Care Nurse's helpline on 01273 696955 Ext. 4111 and leave a message for them during working hours (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm). They will usually return your call the same day. If you are concerned about bruising or swelling **outside of normal working hours**, you should contact your own general practitioner 'Out of hours' service or the inpatient ward, Horsted Keynes on 01444 441881 Ext. 5686. It is normal to feel 'lumps and bumps' around the incision: this is scar tissue and is part of the normal healing process. You may experience numbness or changes in sensation where the scar is. This is because nerve endings are affected during surgery. This is normal.

## How will I know if my wound is infected?

If the wound becomes red, inflamed or painful then this may be a sign of infection. If you are concerned about possible infection, please contact a healthcare professional as described in the previous section.

## How will I know if I have developed a 'seroma'?

A seroma is a common occurrence and is a collection of serum (a straw-coloured fluid produced by all wounds) under the skin of the wound. If you notice a large, soft swelling under the scar you should contact the Macmillan Breast Care Nurses who will discuss with you whether you should have this fluid drained. If this is the case, it will usually mean that you will need to attend a clinic at the Park Centre for Breast Care. This procedure is simple and normally painless and is usually carried out by a Macmillan Breast Care Nurse.

## When can I return to my normal activities?

If you do regular exercise such as 'keep fit' or swimming, you should be able to return to these when your wound has completely healed. Immediately after surgery, you may feel tired but you can increase your activity levels when you feel ready. The surgeon or Macmillan breast care nurse specialist will discuss this with you at your post operative appointment.

## Can I drive after my surgery?

You should be able to drive after a few days when you feel comfortable behind the wheel with your safety belt on and are able to perform an emergency stop. It is advisable to inform your insurance company.

## Contact details

### Macmillan Breast Care Nurse Specialists:

01273 696955 Ext. 4111 (answer phone).

### Horsted Keynes Ward, Princess Royal Hospital:

01444 441881 Ext. 5686

If you have a problem outside of normal working hours (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm) you should contact your GP 'out of hours' service.

If you require this document in a language other than English please inform your interpreter or a member of staff.

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Se precisa deste documento noutra língua por favor informe o seu interprete ou um membro do pessoal.

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Ref number: 398.2

Publication Date: June 2016 Review Date: June 2018

