



CLINICAL EXCELLENCE, QUALITY & SAFETY

Wide Local Excision Breast Surgery (Lumpectomy)

Breast Care Service

WIDE LOCAL EXCISION BREAST SURGERY (LUMPECTOMY)

This information is for women with breast cancer, who are having a wide local excision (lumpectomy) operation. It explains the reason for the operation, the extent of it, what is involved, the after effects and any significant risks that there may be.

A wide local excision operation involves the removal of a breast lump together with an area of normal surrounding breast tissue.

Reasons for this surgery

Your breast surgeon will have discussed with you the reasons for surgery and any other available treatment. The aim of the operation is to remove the cancerous tumour from the breast.

Normally the scars will be around the areola or at the side of the breast so they are not noticeable. There may be some change in the size and shape of the breast and position of the nipple. This is not always too noticeable.

You will also have the opportunity to discuss your treatment plan with the Breast Care nurse. The nurse can show you photographs of previous patients who have undergone similar operations and talk about the hospital stay and any further treatments that may be required.

Please contact the nurse with any worries or concerns that you or your family may have, on 01582 49 7103.

Preparation

You will be given a provisional date for the operation by the breast surgeon at your outpatient appointment. The hospital will send you a confirmation of this date as well as an appointment for your pre-operation health check, which will take place with a nurse a few days before your operation.

- The health check includes some or all of the following checks: your medical history, blood pressure, blood test, a chest x-ray, and an ECG (a heart tracing). Some checks may be done earlier.
- Please do not hesitate to ask the nurse any questions you may have about the procedure; the nurse will also discuss the consent issues with you.
- Please tell the nurse if you have diabetes, or any allergies. Please bring in any medicines you are currently taking and tell the nurse if you are taking warfarin or any other blood thinning medication.
- If you do not attend this pre-operation health check the operation cannot go ahead.

On the day of your operation

- **You must not eat anything from 6 hours before your operation. You may drink water only up until 2 hours beforehand.**
- Unless told otherwise, please go to the main reception of the hospital and report to the waiting list office. You will then be directed to the correct area. A member of staff will check your details.
- **Personal effects:** as well as the items mentioned in the separate booklet about coming into hospital, you should bring in pyjamas if possible, and a soft bra or crop top.
- Remember to bring with you any medicines you take on a regular basis; and your next-of-kin's phone number.
- Your surgeon will see you and confirm that you understand the operation and agree to go ahead with it. The area to be operated on will be marked with a special skin pen.
- The anaesthetist will also see you to discuss your anaesthetic.
- You will be given a gown to change into and an identity band – please check it.
- **Please ask any questions that you may have.**

When the affected area or lump cannot be felt by hand, the procedure may involve two stages:

- 1) Identifying the precise position of the lump, by guiding a very fine wire into it using an x-ray or ultrasound machine, under local anaesthetic. This is called localisation and is performed in the Breast Screening Unit. After this you will go to a ward in the main hospital to await your operation.
- 2) The operation
 - You will have a general anaesthetic and be asleep throughout the operation.
 - The surgeon will remove the lump/s and surrounding normal breast tissue.
 - Some local anaesthetic is put in to make the wound more comfortable and the wound is then closed with dissolving stitches and paper strips over the skin.
 - You may leave the operating theatre with:
 - **A drip** (a needle in a vein with a tube attached) in the back of your hand.
 - **A drain** (a plastic tube to drain excess fluids from the operation site) which helps the area to heal and lessen the bruising.

After your operation

- You will go first to a recovery ward and then return to the ward.
- You can have something to eat and drink as soon as you feel like it.
- Please take painkillers as soon as you are able as the local anaesthetic will wear off and it is important to have some pain relief in your system before this happens.
- There will be a dressing over the wound site.
- You will be able to leave hospital either the same day or when the team feel you are ready.
- You will be looked after at home by a home nursing service, known as "Hospital at Home".

At home

- If your dressing is waterproof you may shower with your back to the water flow and dab dry. Whatever type of dressing you have you can have a shallow bath, but do not soak the wound in water.
- For added support and comfort, we recommend you wear a bra day and night for at least 7 days. It is best to avoid underwired bras at first.
- Take the painkillers prescribed regularly. Your GP can prescribe more if you require them.
- When you come to the outpatient clinic your dressings and paperstitches will be removed and, if the ends of your stitches have been left long, they will be trimmed.
- To start with the wound will be red and slightly swollen with some bruising, this may last for a couple of weeks. You may also notice lumpiness at the site of surgery and this is normal. After a few months your scar will start to fade into a thin pale line and the lumpiness will begin to settle.
- You may feel tired for the first couple of weeks or so, it is helpful to have some help with household jobs. Gradually increase your activities, but use your commonsense and do not overdo it.

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- You can resume driving when the wound is completely healed and you have a good range of arm movements. You will need to be able to do an emergency stop safely.
- You can return to work when you feel ready to do so and/or depending upon any further treatment that may be required. Most people having breast surgery will require 2 – 3 weeks off work.
- **After you leave hospital,** an appointment will be made for you to attend the outpatient clinic a week after your surgery to discuss the results of your operation and any further treatments that may be necessary. A supply of painkillers will be prescribed for you to take home.

Risks and complications

Breast surgery is usually very safe and the most serious complications are very rare. These need to be weighed against the risks of not having the surgery when making your decision. There are some risks associated with most procedures. For breast surgery they may include the following:

Bleeding – this can occur early or later after the surgery. Rarely, a collection of blood may need to be removed under anaesthetic.
Infection – this can be controlled by the use of antibiotics; occasionally intravenous (directly into the bloodstream) antibiotics may be needed, and more rarely surgery may be necessary.

Bruising – some bruising around the site of the wound. This is quite common and will settle down in a few weeks.
Deep Venous Thrombosis (DVT) – you can reduce the risk of this by being as mobile as possible at home.

Fluid collection – this is very common after breast surgery, you may develop fluid collections that may be removed by needle aspiration if uncomfortable.

Pain/discomfort – in the area of the operation should improve with time but some pain and discomfort in this area may persist. Further surgery – may be required to completely remove the cancer. When you are seen in clinic we will have the results of the analysis of the tissue removed which will tell us if further surgery is needed.

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Recurrence – the cancer can sometimes recur in your breast. You will be kept under surveillance and told what to look out for.

Please speak to your breast surgeon before your operation if you have any concerns about these risks.

Emotional, social or personal adjustments

Learning of your cancer diagnosis and having an operation can happen in a short space of time and be a very stressful experience, which can often leave you feeling confused and upset. When you first go home you may find that you are able to cope some days better than others. It takes time to adjust and gradually you will be able to resume your normal activities and way of life.

For further information

If you have any questions or feel any time you or your family would like to discuss any aspect of your treatment or your feelings further, no matter how trivial it may seem, please do not hesitate to contact your Breast Care Nurse on 01582 497103.

Support groups/useful contact numbers

Breast Care Nurse's	01582 497103
Nurse Practitioner	01582 491122 Bleep 033 or 032
Hospital at Home	07534 960143
Breast Cancer Care	0808 800 6000 www.breastcancercare.org.uk
Macmillan Information Line	0808 8080000
L & D Breast Cancer Support Group	01582 497103
Macmillan Information and Support Centre	01582 718189
Orthotics Department	01582 497198

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