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# Risk-reducing breast surgery

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**Breast Unit**

**Patient Information**



## Introduction

We have received a referral from your genetics team or general practitioner (GP) as you have been found to carry a gene mutation putting you at increased risk of developing breast cancer.

Any decision to reduce your risk of developing breast cancer through surgery, by removing the breast tissue, is likely to be complex and will involve many considerations. At The Royal Marsden we have a clear pathway of care to support the decision making process that leads to risk-reducing breast surgery; this may take six months to complete. It helps to ensure high quality clinical care and maximises the chances of a successful outcome. It is a necessary pathway in which you play an active part and is helpful even if you know that you wish to proceed with surgery before you attend your first appointment.

## At your first appointment

Your first appointment will be with a surgeon in the breast surgery team to discuss all options available to you. The main focus will be on risk-reducing breast surgery in the form of mastectomy, with further information provided about your reconstructive choices, but we will also discuss other options available to you as an alternative to surgery. This discussion can involve a lot of information for you to take in. A mastectomy is irreversible

and you need to be confident that you have made the right decision for you. We will give you written information at the end of this consultation including the breast care nurse contact number and a Macmillan booklet on *Understanding risk-reducing breast surgery*.

## **After your first appointment**

You may find after this first appointment that you remain undecided and want to take more time before doing anything further. Alternatively the surgeon may feel that you would benefit from more time to consider things before proceeding to the next step. It is important that you take the time to make the best decision for you.

If, following your initial appointment, you and the surgeon are happy to proceed, you will be referred to the breast care nurses and psychological support team. If you have been referred to the plastic surgery team to discuss a reconstruction using your own tissue you will also have an appointment with the plastic surgery team to discuss this.

## **Your appointment with the breast care nurse**

We will book a session for you to talk with one of the breast care nurses about practical and emotional issues and ask any questions you may have. You will go over the technical aspects of surgery in more detail, discuss possible complications, and look at medical

photographs of patients who have had the surgery. Your breast care nurse can also talk with you about body image, your support network, relationships and intimacy. They will give you written information following this appointment.

## **Your group session with health psychologist**

We will contact you with an appointment for a group session led by a health psychologist and breast care nurse, where you will have the opportunity to explore your feelings and emotions towards the surgery. These sessions allow an opportunity to reflect on your decision and ensure you have considered all the implications of surgery, and offer the chance to gain support and insight from women in a similar position to yourself.

Following the group session, you can call your breast care nurse with any additional questions you may have.

## **Arranging your surgery**

Once you and the team are both happy with your decision to proceed, you can call the secretary below to arrange an appointment in the surgical clinic to finalise the type of operation, attend for medical photographs and plan the date of your surgery.

## Contact details

Your main point of contact within the breast team will be the breast care nurses.

### Breast care nurses

020 7808 2813      Monday to Friday  
9am – 5pm

You may find it useful to contact the secretary to your consultant to rearrange or schedule an appointment.

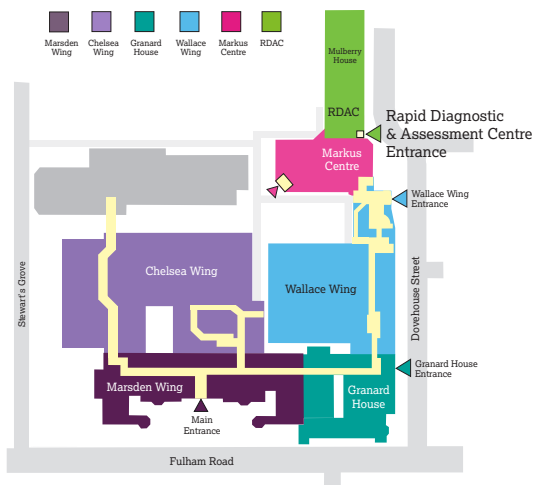
### Secretary to Miss MacNeill

020 7808 2417      Monday to Friday  
9am – 5pm

### Secretary to Mr Gui/Miss Roche

020 7808 2795      Monday to Friday  
9am – 5pm

## Map of Rapid Diagnostic and Assessment Centre (RDAC), Chelsea



## References

Details of the references used in writing this leaflet are available on request from:

The Royal Marsden Help Centre

Freephone: 0800 783 7176

Email: [patientcentre@rmh.nhs.uk](mailto:patientcentre@rmh.nhs.uk)

No conflicts of interest were declared in the production of this leaflet.

Should you require information in an alternative format, please contact The Royal Marsden Help Centre.



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[royalmarsden.org](http://royalmarsden.org)

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