

## Recovering after breast reduction and/or mastopexy surgery

This factsheet explains what you should be aware of following your breast reduction/mastopexy surgery and who you should contact should you have any concerns.

### Looking after your wounds

- Dressings are placed over your breasts immediately after surgery – these stay on until your first outpatient appointment
- You may shower with the dressings on, but do not soak in the bath
- Pat dressings dry or dry them with a cool hair dryer, being careful not to burn your skin (you will experience reduced sensation to the skin at this stage)
- All your stitches will be absorbable - your wounds will be checked at your outpatient appointment
- You will need to wear a sports bra after surgery - you should wear this day and night for four weeks. Underwired bras should be avoided as they may irritate the scars.
- We advise you to sleep on your back with a couple of pillows for two weeks, as this eases any stress or tension on your wounds
- You should avoid lifting, stretching, twisting and exercise, as this tends to pull on the wounds. It is important to stop if you feel pain during any activity.
- We advise you not to drive at first. Please discuss this at your first outpatient appointment.
- Ensure a varied diet with lots of vitamins and protein which are needed for wound healing. Please refer to The Royal Marsden booklet *Eating well when you have cancer* for further information
- Massage your scars with a cream such as E45 when they are **fully healed**
- Protect your scars from sun exposure using SPF 50 sun cream or clothing for at least two years
- **You should completely avoid using hot water bottles or heat pads on your full breast both during the healing stage and once the skin has healed. The skin may look normal, however there may be altered sensation in the area which can result in significant burns.**



## Things to look out for

- Feeling generally unwell
- Fever
- Burning sensation around the wound
- Signs of swelling, increased pain, redness or increased fluid leakage from the wound
- Bleeding from the wound.

You should not smoke after your operation as smoking will increase the risk of complications. You should not return to work until your plastic surgeon advises you to - this could be up to four weeks, depending on the nature of your work.

## Contact details

Please contact your Clinical Nurse Specialist if any problems occur.

### Chelsea:

Clinical Nurse Specialist, Plastic Surgery      020 7811 8318 (NHS)  
020 7352 8171 Ex. 1573 (Private Care)

Breast Care Nurses, Breast Team                      020 7811 8549 (NHS and Private Care)

### Sutton:

Clinical Nurse Specialist, Plastic Surgery      0208 642 6011 Ex. 4345  
(NHS and Private Care)

Breast Care Nurses, Breast Team                      020 8661 3027 (NHS)  
020 8661 3967 (Private Care)

Alternatively, please call:

**The Royal Marsden Macmillan Hotline:**      020 8915 6899

(Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week)

