

Breast Care Service

Information and Advice for Patients Following Discharge from Regular Clinic Follow-up

Information following discharge

We hope that this information will be useful to you following your discharge from surgical follow-up. It explains ways in which you can continue to access support and advice about your health. If you have any concerns or questions that are not covered in this leaflet, please speak to your Breast Care Nurse. You can make an appointment to see us if you have any worries or concerns rather than having a regular clinic visit.

Research has shown that having a regular outpatient follow-up appointment does not help prevent cancer returning or identify any new problems, and many patients find the follow-up visits to the hospital can cause a lot of anxiety.

Breast Care Nurse Support

Your Breast Care Nurse will be known to you since your diagnosis of breast cancer. All patients will have access to the specialist advice, support and information that a Breast Care Nurse can offer. The Breast Care Nurse is available at any point in your care including this period following your discharge from regular hospital follow-up.

If you have any concerns about any new symptoms, wish to discuss delayed breast reconstruction or need advice or support; please contact your Breast Care Nurse on the number at the end of this leaflet.

For prosthesis advice please contact the Breast Care Nurses on 024 7696 7089

For advice regarding management of side effects from hormone blocking treatments such as Tamoxifen, Anastrozole, Letrozole, Exemestane etc please contact the Oncology Breast Care Nurses on 024 7696 7473

Symptoms you should report

The majority of patients have no further problems after they complete their treatment and live to an old age without any cancer-related problems.

The following guide may help you with what symptoms to seek further advice about.



Patient Information

If you have any of the following symptoms for more than three weeks which are getting worse rather than better please contact your Breast Care Nurse:

- New changes in your breast / breasts such as lumps or skin nodules
- Swelling of the arm or hand on the side of the breast cancer
- Lumps around the collar bone, neck or armpit
- Unexpected vaginal bleeding or spotting (if on hormonal treatment)
- Persistent back or bone pain which wakes you up at night, unrelieved with regular painkillers
- A dry cough or a feeling of breathlessness

Your feelings

Everyone experiences different feelings when they no longer need to be seen regularly by their medical team. Some are relieved that they can now start getting their lives back to normal. Others may be concerned about what can happen in the future and are anxious about losing contact with the hospital.

Most people worry about the cancer coming back. This is perfectly normal and usually lessens with time.

If you are finding moving on difficult, you may want to talk to someone about your feelings. This could be your Breast Care Nurse or GP who may be able to recommend counselling. You can talk to someone who has been through a similar experience through the Breast Cancer Peer Support Service or local support groups as listed in the information folder you were provided with at the time of your diagnosis.

Breast awareness and follow-up mammograms

Following your treatment you will be invited to have a regular mammogram (breast X-ray). If you have had a mastectomy, a mammogram will be done on your other breast. After breast conserving surgery (lumpectomy or wide local excision) you will have mammograms on both breasts.

It is important to remain breast aware after your treatment. Being breast aware means knowing how your breasts look and feel. If you notice any changes that aren't normal for you, please contact your Breast Care Nurse.

Mammograms

You will be offered a follow-up mammogram each year until 5 years after the diagnosis of breast cancer. This is to check that your breast tissue is normal. Your mammogram appointment will be at roughly the same time each year.

If you receive an invitation to attend a screening mammogram during the first 5 years please cancel the screening appointment.

Your follow-up mammograms will be:

1 _____ / _____
2 _____ / _____
3 _____ / _____

4 _____ / _____
5 _____ / _____

Patient Information

If you are younger than 50 years old, your follow-up mammograms will still be carried out at the hospital every year until you reach 50 years old.

The number to call for your mammogram results is **024 7696 7200**.

You will continue to receive automatically generated 3 yearly screening mammogram appointments during your follow up if you are in the screening age group 47 to 73 years, and you should cancel these as mentioned above whilst you are on follow up as you will not need to have additional mammograms during this time.

After your final follow-up mammogram if you want to find out when your next screening mammogram is due you can call **024 7696 7200**. The screening programme will automatically call you for mammograms every 3 years until the age of 73 years.

If you are over 73 years old you can still request a mammogram if you wish, but you will not be automatically recalled.

Hormone treatment

If you have been prescribed hormone tablets please stop taking these in _____/_____, unless given instructions by the oncology team.

You and your GP may be contacted to advise a change in your hormone tablet or a bone density scan.

Clinical Trials

If you are taking part in a clinical trial you may be seen regularly for a longer time period.

Self help / Support groups

Breast Cancer Care
0808 800 6000
www.breastcancercare.org.uk

Macmillan Cancer Support
0808 808 0000
www.macmillan.org.uk

Macmillan Information Centre, University Hospital, Coventry

Tel **024 7696 6052** Open Monday to Friday 9.00am – 4.00pm

We offer free support and information to anyone affected by cancer. No appointments are required or you can telephone and leave a message. The Centre is located on the ground floor in the main entrance.

Patient Information

Contact details

Surgical Breast Care Nurse Service
024 7696 7089
024 7696 7157

Oncology Breast Care Nurse Service
024 7696 7473

Monday – Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm

If your call cannot be answered please leave a message on the answer phone.
Messages are checked regularly.

Mammogram appointments

If you need to change your follow-up mammogram appointment, please call:
024 7696 7200

If you have a question about your National Screening Programme mammograms,
please call: 024 7696 7200

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please ask and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

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