

## Preadmission Information for Breast Patients

This is general information about your surgery, your stay in hospital and what will happen following discharge from hospital. Please check the pink sheet your Breast Care Nurse has given you to check which procedures you are having and what your admission and fasting times are.

### How long will I be in hospital?

- ▣ Most breast patients will have a stay of 1 or 2 nights in hospital
- ▣ Women having a mastectomy with immediate reconstruction can expect a longer stay – usually around 4 days

### What should I bring?

- ▣ Your post surgery bra or other supportive garment
- ▣ Your bag & pillow (more about this later)
- ▣ Front opening tops
- ▣ If you have special dietary needs please bring food for snacks until a meal can be organised from the kitchen

### Pre Surgery Advice

- ▣ Your Breast care Nurse will advise you on the time you need to start fasting
- ▣ You may have sips of water until the advised time on the pink sheet. It is important that you do not get dehydrated the days prior to your surgery

### Admission

- ▣ You will be advised by the Breast Care Nurses of your admission time (ignore the time on the letter you receive)

### After your Surgery...

- ▣ If you are having Breast Conserving surgery you are advised to wear a comfortable bra, crop top or supportive singlet 24 hrs a day for the first two weeks (except when showering).
- ▣ If you are having a Mastectomy or reconstruction you are advised that you may wear a bra, crop top or supportive singlet as desired and if comfortable.
- ▣ Driving not advised until you have sufficient movement to avoid an accident – usually approximately 2 weeks. Driving is not advised if you have a drain in.
- ▣ The general anaesthetic makes you tired. Get as much rest as possible. Listen to your body!

### Drains

- ▣ You may have 1 or 2 drains to remove the excess fluid following your surgery

- ▣ Generally the drain in the breast area will be removed prior to discharge
- ▣ You may be sent home with your drain/s

## Drain Care

- ▣ Nurses on the ward will do drain education prior to discharge
- ▣ You will be given an instruction/ record sheet and spare drainage bags prior to discharge from hospital
- ▣ Your drain is held in place with one stitch only – be careful not to pull it out. Ensure the drain tubing is taped to your ribs to avoid it moving or being pulled.

## Wound Care

- ▣ Occasionally a thick firm dressing (pressure dressing) is applied to help reduce swelling or bleeding in the immediate post-operative period. This thicker dressing is usually removed by the Doctor the morning after surgery.
- ▣ Under the pressure dressing your wound will be covered with steri-strips and a waterproof dressing. You can shower under warm water then pat the wound dry with a clean towel.
- ▣ Do not use soap, talcum powder, deodorant or creams near the wound area.
- ▣ The steri-strips and waterproof dressing can stay intact until your post-operative appointment and the doctor or nurse will ascertain if any further dressings are required.

## After you go home...

- ▣ The breast care nurse will contact you several days after discharge from hospital to see how you are and to organise future appointments
- ▣ Your post operative follow up appointment will be approximately 2 weeks after your surgery. Your results will be discussed with you at this visit.
- ▣ Your case will be presented and discussed at the Multi – disciplinary team meeting – attended by the pathologist, surgeons, radiation oncologists, medical oncologists and other staff involved in your care. The team will make a recommendation about a plan for further treatment.

## What to report

- ▣ sudden shivers or chills, hot flushes or sweating, fever and feeling generally unwell
- ▣ wound site becomes painful, swollen and red and/or has discharge
- ▣ unusual shortness of breath or chest pain
- ▣ tenderness and/or swelling or a hot sore area in the calf muscles
- ▣ any excess ooze or bright blood loss from wound site
- ▣ swelling, soreness or aching in the arm, hand or chest wall

## If you have any concerns or questions after discharge from hospital

- ▣ Monday to Friday during office hours you can contact the Breast Care Nurses: 3646 1975 if it is non-urgent. Please leave a message as the office is sometimes unattended and we will return your call as soon as we are able.
- ▣ Outside of office hours or if you need urgent assistance go to your GP or go to the emergency department at your closest hospital
- ▣ **If it is an emergency call 000**