

### **Where to get support and advice**

If you have any questions or are worried about anything, please contact the ward nurses on (0161) 291 5060/2943/2944.

The nurses are available 24 hours a day and no question will be too trivial. Alternatively you can contact your GP, NHS drop in centre or speak to your hospital consultant at your next clinic appointment.

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### **Going home after breast reduction**

**Some advice on how to take care of yourself after breast surgery**

**Women's Health Suite  
Ward C1**

## **Wound Care.**

When cleaning the area around your wound use water and plain soap. Do not use perfume, scented soap, talc or deodorant until your wound is fully healed, this is usually about 3 weeks after surgery. Do not allow the full force of the shower directly onto your wound.

Your wound may be covered with a light dressing, this can be removed if it becomes a problem. Stitches are dissolvable. Paper stitches on top of the wound can be left until they fall off, or may be removed in clinic. You may experience some discomfort to begin with, rest and taking a mild pain killer should help. If you experience severe discomfort or pain, contact your doctor, ward or breast care nurse.

Three weeks after your surgery, or when your wound is fully healed, it is helpful to rub E45, wheatgerm or evening primrose cream into your wound to aid healing. All of these can be bought at either the chemist or health food store.

## **Clothes**

You can wear your normal clothes with a good supporting bra as soon as you feel able to. If your breast is swollen, tender or sensitive a maternity sleep bra, crop top, vest or camisole may provide a little support until you are able to wear a proper bra again.

## **Driving**

You should only drive when you are able to move your arms fully, you feel comfortable, can operate the gear stick easily and be able to do an emergency stop. If the seat belt irritates the wound you may need to buy a clip available from motoring stores to keep the belt loose but functional

Your breasts may be tender, bruised and swollen following surgery. The sooner you can manage to wear a bra and support your breast the better. When your wound is fully healed and the bruising and swelling has settled your wound should fade to a thin line.

## **Sexuality after breast surgery**

Breast surgery does not affect your physical ability to have sex. But your emotions may change your sexual feelings for a while. Women need to feel happy with their bodies to have a satisfying sex life. You may be concerned about your partners reactions and when is the right time for them to see or touch your body. There is no right or wrong time to take this step, when and how depends on your own feelings and relationships. Some women feel very sensitive and need time to be alone to comfort themselves and build their courage to face someone else - even a deeply loved partner. Others need almost instant comfort and find loving touch relieves their fear of being rejected.

## **Resuming your daily activities**

You may feel tired initially and unlikely to be able to return to full work for several weeks. You may need someone who can help you with cooking, cleaning, ironing and heavy shopping initially, but should not feel ill or need to stay in bed.

You should build up to your usual social activities gradually. There is no sport or leisure activity that is permanently ruled out, following your operation, but for strenuous physical activities you should wait 8-12 weeks. If unsure contact your GP, breast care nurse of the ward for advice.