POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Infection: As with any surgical procedure, there is a small risk of infection. Should your wound become red/hot and feel more painful (which may be accompanied by you feeling generally unwell), you should contact your GP or Clinical Nurse Specialist as soon as possible.

Pain: You may also experience pain/discomfort/bruising/swelling around the wound site. You will be given a supply of painkillers to take home with you. If you need a repeat prescription you should see your G.P.

Seroma: A seroma is a collection of fluid beneath the wound. This fluid is usually re-absorbed by the body over time. However, if it causes discomfort then please call your Clinical Nurse Specialist, as it may be necessary to draw off the fluid with a needle and syringe. This procedure is usually quite painless because the surrounding tissue feels numb.

WHO TO CONTACT IF YOU NEED ADVICE

WITHIN WORKING HOURS: (Mon-Fri, 9-3pm)
The Clinical Nurse Specialists 01895 279794/ 279738/ 279711 or 01895 238282 and ask for bleep 5760 or 5917 5914.

OUT OF WORKING HOURS: (evenings and weekends)
Please telephone the main hospital switchboard on 01895 238282 and ask to speak to staff on the ward where you stayed.

Further information is also available on the following websites:

www.cancerbacup.org.uk
www.breastcancercare.org.uk

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WIDE LOCAL EXCISION

This procedure is performed under general anaesthetic. It involves removing the lump and the area of normal surrounding breast tissue. Once removed, this tissue will be analysed and the results will be discussed with you in the outpatients department. If any abnormal cells are found near the edge of the removed tissue you may be advised to undergo a second operation.

The size and location of your scar will vary so please speak to your surgeon if you are concerned. Your breast may also become smaller or a different shape depending on the size of your breasts and the amount of tissue that needs to be removed.

PRE-OPERATIVE ASSESSMENT

You will receive a letter from the admissions department inviting you to attend a pre-operative assessment with the Pre-op Nurse. The purpose of this visit is to complete any relevant paperwork, to weigh you, take your blood pressure, take a blood test and any other necessary tests such as E.C.G and/or chest x-ray. There will also be opportunities for you to ask questions and raise any concerns you may have.

IMPORTANT Please bring any tablets that you have been or are taking with you.

COMING INTO HOSPITAL

You will receive a letter from the Admissions Department with admission date and the ward to go to. You will be admitted on the day of surgery. Your length of stay will be discussed with you by your Consultant prior to admission.

Visiting hours are 2pm until 8pm.
WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU
Please bring nightclothes, (pyjamas may be more comfortable), dressing gown, slippers, and wash bag. Please do not bring jewellery, credit cards or large amounts of money. Some loose change may be useful for the telephone and magazines and patient-line television service etc.

WHAT TO EXPECT BEFORE YOUR OPERATION
On the day of surgery you will be visited by a member of the Breast Team who will complete your consent form with you and also mark the operation site with a pen. You will also meet an Anaesthetist who will explain the risks of anaesthesia.

RARE COMPLICATIONS
Long-standing breast/arm pain due to nerve damage. As with any operation there is a very small risk of developing a chest infection or blood clots in your legs, arms or lungs.

CONSENT
By law we must obtain your consent before any operation. Staff will explain what the procedure is likely to involve together with the risks and benefits before they ask you to sign a consent form. Do not hesitate to ask if you have any questions.

THE OPERATION
You will be taken to theatre (accompanied by a nurse) on a bed or trolley to the Anaesthetic Room. A small needle will be placed into your hand/arm and once the anaesthetic has been given you will fall asleep very quickly.

You will wake in the recovery room where you may be given some oxygen via a mask and painkillers if necessary. You will be monitored closely until you are ready to be returned to the ward.

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER YOUR OPERATION
You may have a large padded dressing over your chest following your operation. It may be necessary to have a ‘drain’ in your wound. This is a small plastic tube attached to a plastic bottle. It is inserted during surgery and will collect any excess fluid or blood. The drain will usually be removed within 1-2 days depending on how much fluid has collected.

Your dressing will be changed before you go home which should be left in place and kept dry until your clinic appointment. If possible wear a bra as this will help to support your wound whilst it is healing - ideally it should be worn day and night until you are seen in clinic.

If you have had the glands under your arm removed a physiotherapist will visit you on the ward to demonstrate some exercises to help regain your arm movement.

BATHING
You may bath or shower but try to keep your dressing dry. Depending where your wound is you may not be able to use a deodorant on the affected side, your Surgeon or Breast Care Nurse will advise you.

DRIVING
It is advised that you do not drive until you have been seen in outpatients, as this can ‘pull’ the wound. If you have undergone axillary surgery you may be unable to drive for 2-4 weeks.

FOLLOW UP
You will be given an outpatient appointment for 7-10 days after your operation. Please bring a friend or relative with you. Your results will be given to you at this appointment. Your stitches will usually be dissolvable or will be taken out in clinic.

RETURN TO WORK
The amount of time you will require off work will vary depending on how physical your job is. Most people will require 2-6 weeks however your Surgeon/Clinical Nurse Specialist will be able to give you further advice. Your GP will be able to supply you with a Fit to Work certificate should you need one.