

# Breast surgery

## (with a wound drain)

This brochure will provide information for your recovery at home. Please keep this in a safe place to refer to over the next few days.

On the \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ you had a \_\_\_\_\_

### Going Home

You will be able to go home once you have made a full recovery from your anaesthetic.

Anaesthesia can affect your co-ordination and reasoning skills. Please do not drive a car, ride a motorbike or bicycle, operate machinery or sign legal documents for at least 18 hours after your surgery.

Please have a responsible adult who can take you home and look after you for the first day and night after your surgery.

### Please contact your GP (Doctor) if:

- You have increased pain
- You have a fever (temperature)
- Your wound is bleeding and will not stop
- Your wound is red or warm to the touch
- You have a thick and/or smelly ooze from your wound
- You have an increase in swelling around your wound or drain
- You have nausea (feeling sick) or vomiting
- You notice one or both of your calf/s has become sore to the touch, is red or there is an increase in size of your calf/s.

**In an emergency dial 111 for ambulance assistance.**

### Pain relief

You may have a sore throat from the breathing tube used in surgery. Sucking on ice or ice-blocks may help.

Unless told otherwise by your doctor, take Paracetamol (Panadol) every four to six hours for the first day after surgery. Do not take more than 8 tablets in a 24 hour period. Please tell your doctor if you have an allergy to Paracetamol. You will have other pain relief tablets to use as well as paracetamol. It is helpful to keep a record of the medicines you use and the time you take them.

You last had: \_\_\_\_\_

Do not take: \_\_\_\_\_

### Wound Care

If your wound has a waterproof bandage please leave this in place until your visit from the District Nurse, or your follow up appointment.

Your stitches are dissolvable (disappear) within 7-10 days. If you can still see your stitches after this time please contact your GP to have your practice nurse remove them.

You can shower as normal, pat the area dry without rubbing after. You should not swim or sit in a spa pool until your wound is completely healed. Do not use creams, powders or perfume near your wound while it is still healing as these can irritate the skin.

Your wound may feel itchy, tingly and slightly lumpy. Try not to scratch or pull off the scab as these help your wound to heal.

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Try to avoid wearing tight clothing as this can irritate your wound. Ladies may find it more comfortable to wear a soft bra day and night initially.

Your wound will heal in 4 – 6 weeks. It will take up to 18 months for the scar to fully heal.

### **Care of your wound drain**

The drain/s is in place to help remove any fluid created by your body after the operation. The drain is held in place with stiches. A district nurse will meet with you at home to help you with your drain.

The district nurse will remove your drain in a few days to a few weeks. Try to keep the drain site dry and clean. Please refer to your wound drain information sheet.

### **Diet and Fluids**

You can eat your normal diet after surgery. Constipation (not being able to poo) can be a problem for some people after an anaesthetic. Include plenty of fresh fruit, vegetables and water in your diet to keep your bowel habits regular.

### **Activity and Exercise**

You will need to relax and rest for the next 48 hours then slowly return to your usual activity as you can. You should be able to return to work within 3 weeks, depending on the type of work you do and how you feel. Please ask the Breast Clinic staff if you require a certificate for your employer.

Some gently exercise each day will help with your recovery. Walking is best. No heavy lifting (7 kilograms or more), pushing, strenuous exercise or contact sports for at least 4 weeks to help your wound heal.

It is important to follow the shoulder exercises given to you by the Physiotherapist.

Sexual activity can be resumed when you feel ready.

### **Follow-up**

Your follow-up appointment will be scheduled for 2-3 weeks. If you do not have an appointment, or do not receive an appointment within the next week please call the Breast Clinic: 04 806 0360.

## **Contact us**

If you have any concerns or questions following discharge from hospital, please contact the Breast Clinic or one of the Afterhours medical centres.

**In an emergency dial 111 for ambulance assistance.**

**Breast Clinic Phone: 04 806 0360**

**After-hours medical centres;**

- **Kenepuru Hospital accident and medical.** Open 24 hours a day. Phone 04 918 2300
- **Paraparaumu team medical Coastlands Shopping centre.** Open 8am – 10pm daily. Phone 04 298 2228
- **Waikanae medical centre.** Open Monday – Thursday 7pm – 8am and Friday 5pm – 8pm or anytime weekends and public holidays. Phone 04 293 6002
- **Accident and urgent medical centre Wellington.** Open 8am – 11pm daily. Phone 04 384 4944