

# Breast Lumpectomy

## If you have received general anesthetic:

- Rest at home following discharge today and resume activity as tolerated tomorrow or as per surgeon's instructions.
- You may have a sore throat for the first 24 hours due to the use of a breathing tube while you were asleep.
- Drink plenty of fluids and use throat lozenges or ice cubes for relieving throat pain.

### For 24 hours Do Not:

- Drive any type of motorized vehicle
- Ride as a passenger on a motorcycle
- Operate power tools
- Sign legal documents for 24 hours
- Look after dependent persons
- Drink alcohol

*We hope your recovery will be comfortable.*

The information in this document is intended solely for the person to whom it was given by the health care team

## Follow-Up Care

- There will be follow-up visits with your doctor(s).
- The BC Cancer Agency has a great deal of helpful information and will discuss your treatment and future care with you. It is usually helpful to write your questions down for your next appointment.

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*Thank you to the two courageous women with breast cancer who shared their experiences for writing this guide.*

## Resources

BC Cancer Agency:  
Breast Cancer Information Kit

Internet:  
<http://www.bccancer.bc.ca>  
[www.breastcancernavigationmap.com](http://www.breastcancernavigationmap.com)

The Canadian Cancer Society's Cancer Information Service  
1-888-939-3333

If questions or concerns call  
BC Nurse Line: 1 866 215-4700  
(604) 215-4700  
Hearing Impaired: 1 866 889-4700

Or contact your physician

In Emergency:  
Call 911 or go to the hospital.

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## Post-operative Discharge Instructions

Abbotsford Regional Hospital & MMH



# Breast Lumpectomy

## Day of Discharge

When the doctor tells you that you may go home:

- A dressing change may or may not be necessary by the nurse before you leave the hospital.
- If you have a drain, it will remain in place for a few days after discharge
- The nurse will teach you how to care for your drain.

## When you get home

### What activity am I allowed to do?

Resuming normal activities helps you get your strength back and prevent the problems caused by inactivity. The sooner you mobilize, the sooner you will recover to pre-surgery activity. Check with your doctor regarding return to work, daily activities, and participation in sports.

- Perform your shoulder/arm exercises if instructed to do so by your Physiotherapist. Attend follow-up appointments with your Physiotherapist if this applies to you. *This is important in your recovery.*

### What should I eat and drink?

- Your appetite will improve as you start to feel better.
- Unless otherwise instructed, drink 6-8 glasses of liquid daily.
- To help you heal, eat foods containing protein and vitamins (meat, eggs, cheese, milk, vegetables and fruit).

### How do I look after my dressing/drain?

- **If you have a drain**, do not get your operative area or drain site wet until the drain has been removed.
- **If you do not have a drain**, you can shower the day after surgery. Expose the stitches, staples or skin tapes. Only pat dry after your shower, **do not rub**. If the tapes fall off, there is no need to replace them.
- Be careful not to tug on your drain tube if you have one. Pin it securely to your clothing and carefully tuck the end of the drain under your clothing.
- If you have any questions or concerns ask your doctor or Home Care nurse.

**Before you go home, check with the nurse if you need to have stitches, or staples removed.**

### What if I have pain?

- After discharge from the hospital you should not experience much discomfort. The doctor will write you a pain medicine prescription and the nurse will review it with you.
- Tenderness of the incision and drain site is normal and expected.
- Inform your doctor if you are having increased pain.
- You may or may not wear a bra as long as you are comfortable. You may use deodorants and antiperspirants, but avoid powders (may get into wound).

### What if I am nauseated?

- If you feel sick to your stomach, you may take anti-nausea medication as directed by your medication/bottle instructions, pharmacist or doctor.

### Emotional Needs

- Some patients describe feelings of sadness, anger, loss or fear following this type of surgery. This response is normal.
- We encourage you to talk to your loved ones, nurses, doctor or support group.
- Refer to Cancer Agency support group pamphlet –ask at the Agency. You may ask a volunteer to contact you to offer you support. This has been very helpful for many women living with breast cancer.
- Refer to your Breast Cancer Information Kit given to you. There are contact phone numbers and information for you that you may use at different times in your breast cancer journey. Feel free to discuss what **your needs** for information and support are, with your doctor and nurses.

**Your experience with breast cancer is as individual as you are. Ask for what you need, when *you* need it.**

### Please Contact your Family Doctor or Surgeon If:

- Chills or you develop a fever - higher than 38°C (100.4°F)
- Redness or red streaks in skin near wound
- Marked swelling around your incision site(s)
- Pus, discharge, or foul odor from your incision(s)
- Continued and/or heavy bleeding from your incision(s)
- You develop a hard, swollen breast
- Pain not relieved by prescribed medication
- Nausea and/or vomiting that will not stop