

## Patient information

# Post-operative advice for patients undergoing skin sparing mastectomy/axillary surgery and immediate implant-based breast reconstruction

You have been discharged from hospital with a wound drain in your reconstructed breast. The drain is attached to plastic collection bottles called Redivac. The bottle is clearly marked with tape and you have been asked to monitor the output from each bottle in the bottle for 24 hour intervals by marking the level with a pen on the tape (it is suggested you should do this at 11.00 am each day). Please record the amount drained on the chart you have been given. This enables the nurses to know when it is time for the drain to be removed (usually when the drainage is less than 40mls in a 24 hour period; the drain is usually ready to remove seven days post operation).

### Potential problems with Redivac drains

1. The drain may lose its vacuum and stop draining.
2. The drain may leak.
3. The drain may fall out or become disconnected from its bottle.

### Potential problems with the reconstructed breast

1. The operation site becomes red, hot or you experience severe discomfort (some mild pain is expected).
2. The reconstructed breast becomes **very** swollen or discoloured (mild burning is expected).
3. You become generally unwell with a fever.

If you notice any of the above, please contact the nurses on F5 ward on (01284) 713262 for advice. They will arrange for you to come to the ward and assess the problem and, if necessary, see a doctor.

**Please** remember that no doctor or nurse should attempt to draw off fluid from your breast without ultrasound guidance. **Please** remind them you have an implant which can be ruptured by needles.

## **Bra information**

Following surgery you will have dressings over your wounds. They can feel quite bulky so it might not feel comfortable to wear your bra until the dressings have been reduced and your drain removed. You will be advised about this before you leave hospital.

## **Arm exercises**

Please continue with the gentle arm exercises until you have full shoulder movement.  
**No heavy lifting**

## **Appointments**

You will be asked to return to the Outpatient Dressings Clinic a few days following discharge, when the dressings will be checked and changed if necessary. Also, the drain and output will be reviewed and if draining less than 40mls, it may be removed. If not, you will be given another clinic appointment.

Two weeks following surgery you will see your surgeon who will give you your post-operative results. Any further appointments will be at your surgeon's request.

If you have any concerns about the drain, think it may not be working or you notice bleeding or any other problem, please telephone ward F5 on (01284) 713262. Alternatively you can telephone the Breast Care Nurses about anything else on (01284) 713281 (Monday to Friday, 8.30 am to 4.30 pm).

***Donations in support of our work may be made to the West Suffolk Hospital Breast Cancer Fund.***

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)*  
<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>

