

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

**Care of Wound Drains following
Breast Surgery**

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If you have difficulty reading, understanding or require the content of this leaflet in another language or format i.e. Braille, audiotape or large print, please contact the Breast Care Nurse who will arrange a suitable alternative.

Introduction

You will have already received information regarding your operation. Sometimes 'drains' are used, therefore this leaflet aims to provide you with more detail about drains and how to care for them.

Why is a drain needed?

Wound drains are inserted at the time of your operation to remove fluid from the operation site. This reduces the risk of fluid collecting in the wound and helps healing.

Where will the drain be?

You may have a breast site drain, an axillary drain [armpit] or both.

Can I go home with a drain in situ?

It is quite safe for you to go home with a drain in place. A district nurse referral will always be made for your continued support.

When is the drain removed?

The drain can be removed once it is collecting less than 40mls in 24 hours. It can be removed by your district nurse.

The drain will always be removed on the 10th day after your operation regardless of how much it is draining. This may alter if you have had reconstructive surgery.

When the drain has been removed

Once the drain has been removed it is still possible for you to develop a fluid collection. This is called a seroma. This fluid will usually be absorbed naturally by your body if left alone.

Is a seroma harmful?

No. Seromas are not harmful. However, some patients find this uncomfortable and need to have their seroma aspirated (fluid removed).

How is a seroma aspirated?

This is done by inserting a small needle which is connected to a syringe. The syringe is then used to withdraw the fluid. This only takes a couple of minutes and then the needle is removed.

What to do if you feel your seroma needs aspirating.

The procedure may be performed by a member of the Breast Care Team. This can be arranged by contacting either:

Monday - Friday

Suzy Walker and Jodie Lupton 01423 553398
Breast Care Nurses

or

Contact your consultant's secretary who will arrange for you to come back to the next clinic.

Mr Ray's Secretary 01423 555356

Mr Adelekan's Secretary 01423 553307

Weekends

If you are unable to contact the appropriate person **or it is the weekend** and you feel you cannot wait until the next clinic - please contact Nidderdale Ward 01423 553747

They will arrange a suitable time to attend the ward for seroma aspiration.

Remember that a seroma is not harmful. If you can possibly wait until after the weekend you will have your seroma drained more quickly as there are more staff available.