

It is recommended that you **Do Not Drive** until you have checked with your Consultant, and even then, **only drive** when you feel able and it does not hurt to do so. You will have to wear a seat belt and it is a good idea to start gradually and build up.

## Other useful information

### Support groups

Breast Cancer Care

[www.breastcancercare.org.uk](http://www.breastcancercare.org.uk)

Cancer BACUP

[www.cancerbacup.org.uk](http://www.cancerbacup.org.uk)

### Other useful contacts

If you wish to discuss your treatment with a Physiotherapist please contact the therapy room:

**0151 426 1600**

**and ask the operator for extension  
2243**

Breast Reconstruction Nurse Specialist:

**0151 426 1600**

**and ask for extension 2235**

You can also leave a message on this number.

**This leaflet can be made available in alternative languages/formats on request.**

Creation Date – October 2006

Review Date – May 2018

Produced by Plastic Surgery Unit

## Mersey Regional Plastic Surgery Unit

**Ward 3A: 0151 430 1520**

**Advice for patient  
following “*DIEP*”  
breast reconstruction  
surgery**

**Patient Information  
Leaflet**

**Whiston Hospital  
Warrington Road  
Prescot L35 5DR**

## Dressings

Please leave all tapes in place when you are discharged until your next dressing clinic appointment.

You are allowed to take a daily shower. Your stitches will usually dissolve, and do not need to be removed.

Please take your painkillers and any medication that has been ordered for you during your stay in hospital, as advised by the nurse on discharge.

**Please ensure hands are cleaned thoroughly if you or someone else needs to touch your wound at any time.**

It is recommended that you wear a **non-wired** support bra, day and night for the next **4 weeks** following your operation.

## Exercises

If you have been given exercises to perform by a Physiotherapist, it is **very important** that you continue to do them as you were shown.

It is advised that you **restrict your leisure activities for the next 6-8 weeks** following the operation and then build up gradually. Walking is ideal in the meantime.

You will need to have a few weeks convalescence after you go home. After a period of **4-6 weeks** you can gradually build up the amount of light activity undertaken. Remember to rest in-between tasks and if anything hurts do not push it, leave it and try again in a few days.

## Problems

You should check your breasts, abdomen and stitch lines daily for:

- Hardness to the breast or abdomen

- Swelling to the breast or abdomen
- Areas on the breast or abdomen which feels hot to touch and looks inflamed
- A green/brown smelly discharge which come through the dressings
- Worsening pain which is not relieved by taking pain killers
- Pain around the stitch lines.

Please contact ward 3A or the Breast Reconstruction Nurse should you have any of the above problems.

## Dressing Clinic

You will be given an appointment to attend dressing clinic.

**It is very important that you keep this appointment**

The telephone number for the dressing clinic is:

**0151 430 1285**

Please contact the clinic straight away if you will not be able to keep your appointment.

If an ambulance has been arranged for you to return to the dressing clinic, **please be ready 2 hours before** your appointment time as ambulances tend to collect patients early and cannot wait for you to get ready.

## Aftercare

The nurse in the dressing clinic will inform you when your wound(s) are completely healed. Once completely healed you can begin to wash the areas with a mild un-perfumed soap and pat dry with a clean towel. You will be shown how to massage the area twice a day with a moisturising cream.

This is a complex operation, and you will take weeks, even months to fully recover. It is normal that you will feel more tired than usual for a few weeks following this operation, but this will pass.

**Continued overleaf .....**