



Your Guide to Breast Surgery

at St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital

INTRODUCTION

Your Guide to Breast Surgery at St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital

This booklet describes the care you will receive while in St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital for your breast surgery. Please note this is only a guide. Your care and treatment will alter according to how you recover as the type of surgery and responses to treatment can vary from person to person.

During your admission please feel welcome to invite a support person to accompany you during consultations with members of your healthcare team.

Whether you are having breast conserving surgery or a mastectomy as part of your breast cancer treatment plan, you are likely to require a short stay in hospital (usually one to three days).

This booklet aims to give you an idea of what to expect after your operation.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your physical or emotional health, or any special requests for your hospital stay please talk to your nurse.

This enables the healthcare team to tailor individual assistance to meet your needs.

The breast care nurse is there to help co-ordinate your care between departments, answer your questions and provide support. If you are scheduled for surgery late in the day, every attempt will be made to provide you with a ward bed while you wait for your surgery.



YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM

There are a number of people who will care for you during your stay.

- **Breast Surgeon** – will usually visit you daily to check on your progress.
- **Plastic Surgeon** – will usually visit you daily to check your progress if you have also undergone breast reconstruction.
- **Specialist Breast Care Nurse** – will guide you on your day of surgery and will usually visit you daily and provide a range of information and resources. She may have had contact with you pre-admission and will help co-ordinate your care.
- **Physiotherapist** – will visit during your stay to show and assist you with arm and shoulder exercises, provide advice regarding posture and positioning of your arm and assist with your physical recovery.
- **Clinical Nurse Manager** – is in charge of the ward. They will try to see you daily and assist with any enquiries you may have regarding your care.
- **Nurse** – will be assigned to care for you and several other patients each shift.
- **Chaplains** – are members of the healing team and are available for patients and their families.



Your healthcare team

You or your healthcare team can complete the list below.

NAME AND CONTACT NUMBER

Breast Surgeon

Plastic Surgeon

Women's Health Physiotherapist (Outpatient) (07) 3834 4285

Chaplain (07) 3834 4323

Breast Care Nurse 0428 197 923

St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital (07) 3834 4444

AFTER SURGERY



Day Surgery Procedure

If you are having a day procedure, once you are awake and comfortable you will be taken to the day recovery lounge. This is where you will have something to eat and drink while waiting for your support person to take you home. You will be given information from the day surgery nurse regarding your recovery at home.

Inpatient after surgery

After surgery you will wake up in the recovery room. The recovery nurse will monitor your vital signs (temperature, pulse, blood pressure and your wound). Once you are awake and comfortable you will be taken to the ward by the recovery nurse.

Your ward nurse will continue to monitor your vital signs and your wound regularly.

You might have:

- An intravenous (IV) cannula ('drip') in your arm for fluid and IV medication.
- A drain to remove excess blood and fluids from your wound. Your surgeon will request your wound drain tube be removed when the drainage is minimal.
- A dressing over the wound.
- You will be required to wear compression stockings to prevent blood clots. Your nurse will assist with fitting these before you go into surgery. Your surgeon may request that you wear an additional compression device over the stockings. If this is required your nurse will also assist with fitting this.

Your nurse will regularly assess your pain level and your anaesthetist or surgeon will prescribe analgesia (pain medication) to assist your care after the surgery in the form of

- Injection
- Oral tablets
- Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA pump)

When required, your nurse will administer analgesia as prescribed and ask for feedback on your pain. Please ask your anaesthetist, surgeon, nurse or pharmacist any questions you may have about pain relief, or other IV fluids.

If you have had an axillary dissection, your clinical team will determine the arm that is used for your intravenous drip, blood tests and taking of blood pressure. Please discuss this with your surgeon or nurse.

Your nurse will:

- Regularly encourage you to take deep breaths and to move your feet and ankles while in bed.
- Give you ice or sips of water within one to two hours after your surgery and a light meal (as tolerated) about four hours after surgery, when you are fully awake.
- Remain with you when you get up for the first time, to assist you to the bathroom so that you can wash and go to the toilet.
- Ask if you have passed urine after your surgery.
- Monitor your recovery (and keep your team informed of your progress).



Day one after surgery

Today your nurse will assist you with your recovery after surgery. You can eat and drink normally. When you are able to, your nurse will remove your IV fluids as advised by your surgeon.

Your nurse will assist you to shower or sponge, depending on your wound dressings and your surgeon's preference. If you wish you can change into your own nightwear. A loose t-shirt or pyjama top (one with buttons at the front) is best.

The nurse will also monitor your vital signs and wound. You will be encouraged to walk around the ward as much as possible.

Visits from the healthcare team may include:

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|-------------------|----------------------|
| ■ Breast Surgeon | ■ Breast Care Nurse |
| ■ Plastic Surgeon | ■ Physiotherapist |
| ■ Pharmacist | ■ Nurse Unit Manager |
| ■ Chaplain | |

A breast care nurse will visit you in the ward and provide a supportive breast pillow, post surgical bra and a drain carry bag (if required). With your permission, she may also order you a My Journey Kit and a My Care Kit (see page 10).

The physiotherapist will visit and show you how to do arm exercises that will help your recovery after surgery (see page 8). You should perform the exercises as instructed and not overuse the arm.

You may have some wound dressings removed today (depending on your surgeon's preference). When seeing your wound for the first time you may feel nervous, emotional or concerned. You may have some swelling or bruising around the wound on your breast or chest. Please advise your nurse if you would like your support person present. Your nurse or breast care nurse will be able to provide support and answer your questions.

If you have a wound drain/s your surgeon will decide if it can be removed. Your nurse will attend to this. If you go home with your drain/s your breast care nurse or ward nurse will provide you with education, a booklet on drain care and extra drain bags.



Day two after surgery

As you continue to recover from your surgery you will be encouraged by your nurse to walk around the ward and perform exercises given to you by the physiotherapist.

If your wound dressings were not removed yesterday, they may be removed today or replaced, depending on your surgeon's preference.

Today, you may have further visits from your healthcare team including; the surgeon, breast care nurse, physiotherapist, nurse unit manager and chaplain.

Most patients will go home either today or tomorrow. If you have had a breast reconstruction you may benefit from staying longer.

Day of Discharge

Discharge from the hospital is usually around 10am.

When you are being discharged, you will receive care instructions to take home with you.

Prior to going home you may be seen by your surgeon, breast care nurse and pharmacist.

Please ask your surgeon or nurse any questions you may have about your care.

You will be advised by your surgeon when to make a follow up appointment.

Following Surgery to the Lymph Nodes

Following the removal of one or more lymph nodes, it is common to experience some uncomfortable temporary side effects. This includes lymph back-up in the armpit, called seroma. Other side effects can include heightened sensitivity, shoulder stiffness, mild armpit discomfort and numbness in the armpit and upper arm. If blue dye has been used to find the sentinel node, the urine may turn blue for up to 24 hours after surgery. The skin of the breast may also become blue, but will fade in time. If you are concerned with any side effects from surgery to your lymph nodes, please contact your surgeon or breast care nurse.

You will need to make a follow up appointment with your physiotherapist after your drain has been removed. Phone (07) 3834 4285.

EXERCISES



BED EXERCISES

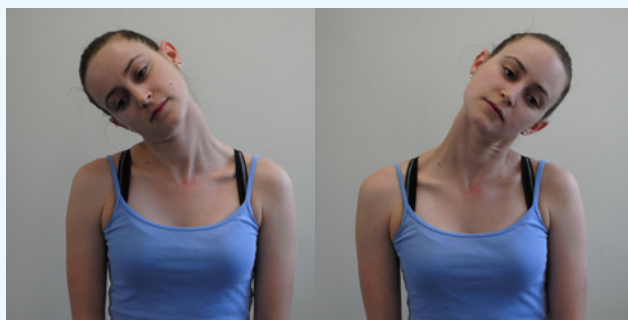
(Every hour that you are awake)

1. Deep breathing – five deep breaths and hold
2. Ankle pumping – 10 times
3. Thigh tensing – 10 times
4. Bottom tensing – 10 times

RELAXATION EXERCISES

(Three times per day)

1. Neck stretches
 - a. Gently tilt head to left side, hold 20 seconds. Repeat to right, hold 20 seconds. Repeat five times.



- b. Gently turn head to left, hold 20 seconds. Repeat to right, hold 20 seconds. Repeat five times.



2. Shoulder rolls
 - a. Gently roll shoulders forwards, repeat 10 times. Repeat rolling shoulders backwards.

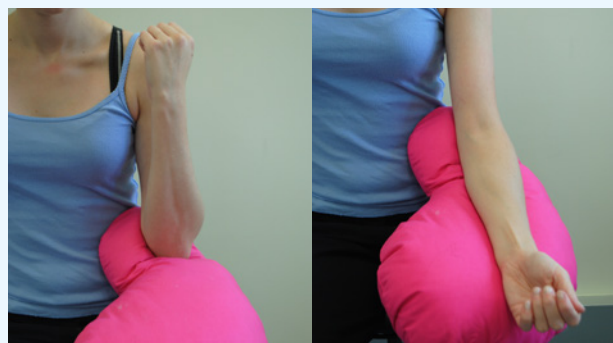


LEVEL 1 RANGE OF MOTION EXERCISES

(Three times per day)

Can commence day one

1. Elbow – gently bend and straighten 10 times.



2. Wrist – with elbow supported on pillow, move wrist back and forth 10 times.



3. Hand – with elbow supported on pillow, close hand and squeeze to make a fist, then relax fingers and open hand 10 times.



LEVEL 2 RANGE OF MOTION EXERCISES

(Three times per day)

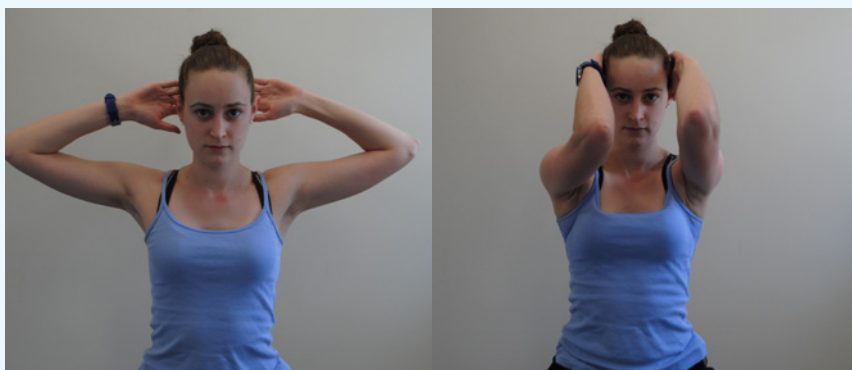
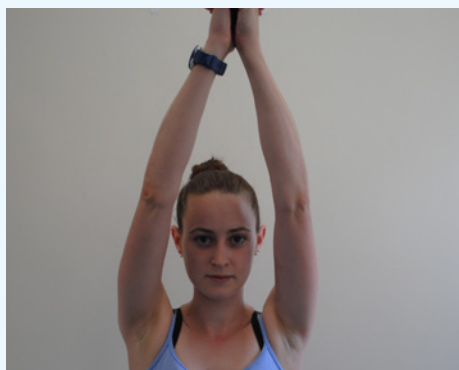
Do not do level 2 exercises if you still have a drain in.

Can commence when pain settles and drain removed.

1. Shoulder one – clasp hands in front of chest, straighten your elbows stretching your arms out in front at shoulder height. Repeat 10 times.



2. Shoulder two - clasp hands in front of chest, straighten your elbows stretching your arms up above your head. Repeat 10 times.
3. Wings – with hands behind head, bring elbows forwards together, then stretch them back out to side. Repeat 10 times.



4. Wall Walking – stand facing wall and slowly walk fingers up the wall. Repeat 10 times.
5. General advice for your recovery
 - Walk as directed by the physiotherapist
 - Sit out of bed with affected arm supported.





PRECAUTIONS FOR DISCHARGE

(for up to six weeks as advised)

- No lifting (heaviest lift is 2 litre milk container)
- No housework / gardening
- No driving until otherwise directed by your surgeon
- Arms should not be raised above shoulder height before drain removal.

LYMPHOEDEMA

Monitor your affected limb for signs of lymphoedema, which may include swelling, stiffness, aching, heaviness, limitation of movement, tightness in skin or in clothing, or temperature changes. Contact your doctor or physiotherapist if you are unsure.

ONGOING PHYSIOTHERAPY

We recommend that you see a physiotherapist two to three weeks after you go home to:

- Progress shoulder range of movement and strength
- Provide lymphoedema screening
- Progress your general exercise.

St Andrew's Allied Health service offers experienced breast lymphoedema physiotherapists and can be contacted on (07) 3834 4285.

RESOURCES

My Journey Tool

The My Journey Tool is a free resource available to Australians who have been diagnosed with early breast cancer. It provides comprehensive practical information, that is easy to understand. It can be ordered (with your consent) from the Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) by your breast care nurse and can be sent to you directly or accessed via the BCNA website.

My Care Kit

The My Care Kit is also provided free from the BCNA, to Australian women following surgery for breast cancer. The kit contains a specially designed berlei bra and soft forms and also contains information and support material to assist you during your recovery process.

Helpful Websites

FOR YOU

Cancer Council Queensland	www.cancerqld.org
Cancer Australia	www.canceraustralia.gov.au
Breast Cancer Network Australia	www.bcna.org.au
Choices Cancer Support Centre	www.wesley.com.au/choices

HELPING TEENAGERS

My parent's cancer (Cancer Australia)	www.myparentscancer.com.au
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YOUNG CHILDREN

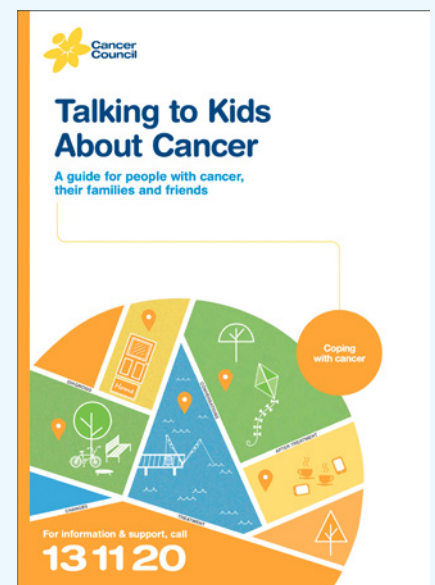
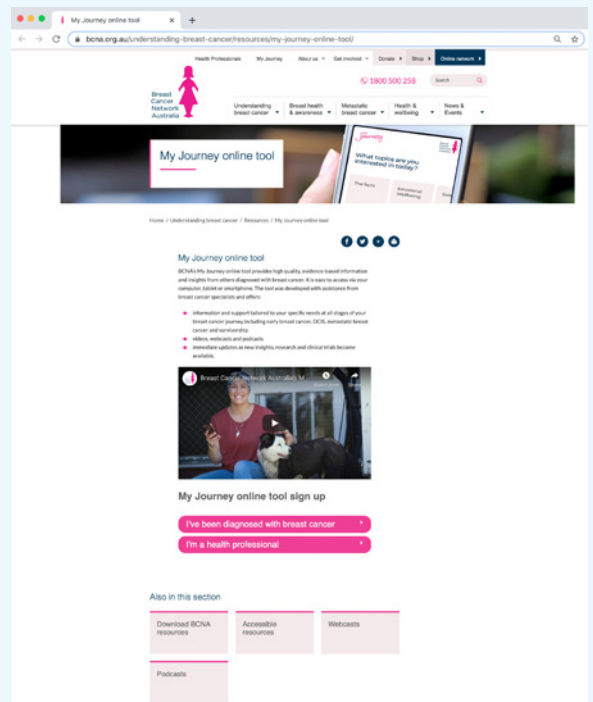
The *Talking to Kids About Cancer* book, available from the breast care nurse or Cancer Council Queensland by calling 13 11 20.

Peer Support

A follow up telephone call is also available to you from someone who has personally experienced breast cancer. This type of support is valuable because of your shared cancer experience. You can connect with this support at anytime after discharge through:

Choices Program on 1800 227 271 or the

Cancer Council QLD Helpline on 13 11 20, Monday to Friday.





St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital is a 250 bed not-for-profit private hospital in Spring Hill, Brisbane, which has been providing healthcare to patients since 1958.

St Andrew's has earned a reputation as a first class hospital particularly for complex clinical procedures with one of the highest patient complexities in Australia.

Part of UnitingCare, our vision is to provide our patients (and their families) with 'first class treatment and world class results' in all areas of healthcare. This is achieved by attracting the best medical practitioners, providing them with excellent resources and meticulously auditing our patient outcomes.

Facilities at St Andrew's include 15 theatres including a hybrid theatre, three cardiology catheter laboratories, endoscopy suites, an intensive care unit and emergency centre.

We are part of UnitingCare, one of the largest not-for-profit organisations in Queensland, which represents Blue Care, Lifeline, ARRCs, The Wesley Hospital, Buderim Private Hospital and St Stephen's Hospital in Hervey Bay.

Donations

St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital is a not-for-profit hospital and receives no commonwealth, state or local government funding. The hospital relies on income from patients' health funds, direct patient contributions and fundraising to enable us to continue to provide excellent health care to our patients.

If you wish to make a tax deductible donation, please contact our Fundraising team by phoning 1800 961 441, emailing fundraising@standrewhospital.com.au or visit our website at www.standrewhospital.com.au

Parking

Pay car parks, operated by Secure Parking, can be found in the following areas:

- St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital, entrance on North Street
- St Andrew's Place, entrance on North Street, opposite Emergency Centre
- Secure Parking, 55 Little Edward Street, entrance on Hope Street

The Spring Hill Loop operates on a continuous loop between the CBD and Spring Hill including St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital. The service has yellow signposted bus stops, and stops along the route include Post Office Square and Central Station.



St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital

457 Wickham Tce, Spring Hill

Main Reception: (07) 3834 4444

Facsimile: (07) 3834 4256

GPO Box 764

BRISBANE QLD 4001

standreshospital.com.au

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