

Information sheet: TOTAL DUCT CLEARANCE

You have been recommended a duct clearance to remove the milk ducts and breast tissue deep to the nipple. The operation is usually performed under general anaesthesia as a day-case. The surgery is performed through an incision around the border of the areola (dark skin around the nipple) to provide the best cosmetic outcome. The skin is closed with internal, absorbable sutures that usually leave an excellent scar that fades with time. The tissue removed will undergo careful analysis in pathology and the results will be discussed with you at the first consultation after surgery. Depending on the final pathology result, further surgery may be required.

Possible side effects of surgery

General: As with all operations there is a small risk of pain, bleeding and infection following surgery. If you are at increased risk of developing a post-operative infection you may be given antibiotics to reduce your risk.

Numbness: The nipple will be numb after this operation, but this usually improves with time, although there may be some residual numbness that persists.

Flattening of the nipple: The nipple/areola may appear flatter after this operation and it is likely that the nipple will lose the ability to become erect.

Poor blood supply to the nipple: Very occasionally the blood supply to the nipple is reduced following this operation resulting in “necrosis” or death of the tissue at the tip of the nipple. If this occurs, the tip of the nipple forms a scab that eventually falls off leaving a nipple that is shorter than before the operation. This complication is extremely rare.