

**Information sheet: MASTECTOMY**

You have been recommended a simple mastectomy as part of your surgical treatment for breast cancer. Under general anaesthesia the breast will be removed from the underlying muscle. The operation usually lasts up to one and a half hours and requires a stay in hospital of up to three nights. The operation involves removing almost all of the breast tissue, including the nipple and areola (dark skin around the nipple), leaving a scar that is flat on the chest wall. When you wake up from surgery you will find a small plastic tube (drain) which takes tissue fluid away from under the wound and this will stay in place for three days and will be removed before you are discharged from hospital.

If mastectomy is performed at the same time as a breast reconstruction then a skin-sparing mastectomy will be performed. This usually involved removal of the breast tissue through a small incision in the middle of the breast which removes the nipple and areola. This procedure preserves nearly all the breast skin, while removing almost all of the breast tissue, and is an important part of immediate breast reconstruction.

**Possible side effects of surgery**

**Surgery:** 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.

**Mastectomy:** It is possible to have some shooting pains in this area or numbness around the scar. These usually fade with time.

**Seroma:** this is a collection of fluid under the wound that can occur after the drain has been removed. If the collection is very large or painful it can be easily drained using a small needle via the wound.