

**Information sheet: WIDE LOCAL EXCISION OF BREAST**

You have been recommended a wide local excision as part of your surgical treatment for breast cancer. Under general anaesthesia the tumour, together with a margin of normal tissue, is removed, while preserving the rest of the breast. The operation lasts up to one hour and is usually performed as a day-case or one night stay. If it is not possible to feel the tumour in your breast it may be necessary to insert a guide wire under local anaesthetic, or place a skin marker over the tumour, just before surgery. Your surgeon will explain this to you if necessary. The surgery is performed through an incision close to the lump to provide the best cosmetic outcome. Where possible the defect left by removal of the tumour will be closed using oncoplastic techniques that mobilise the surrounding breast tissue to fill the space. 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 if tumour cells are found close to any of the edges then further surgery may be required. This occurs in up to 20% of cases and may involve either removal of a small amount of additional tissue (re-excision) or mastectomy depending on the pathology results.

**Possible side effects of surgery**

**Wide excision:** The breast may be a little swollen initially but this usually settles within 2-3 months. It is common to have some numbness around the wound. Depending on the volume of breast tissue removed, and the size of your breast, there may be some loss of volume at the site of surgery.

**Bleeding/infection:** these can happen after any type of breast surgery and occur in approximately 5-10% of all patients. If you are at increased risk of developing a post-operative infection you may be given antibiotics to reduce your risk.

**Seroma:** this is a collection of fluid under the wound that can occur after surgery if the breast cavity has not been closed deep to the wound. If the collection is very large or painful it can be easily drained using a small needle but it will usually resolve spontaneously.

Professor Gordon Wishart; Information Sheet: Wide Local Excision, May 2015

For more information please visit [www.gordonwishart.com](http://www.gordonwishart.com)