

Discharge from routine follow-up for patients treated for breast cancer

Information for Patients

Edinburgh Breast Clinic, Western General Hospital (WGH)
St John's Hospital, Livingston (SJH)

Introduction

Now you have been discharged from yearly follow-up, this leaflet provides advice on how you can be referred back to the breast care team if you have any concerns.

Why have I been discharged from the Edinburgh Breast Unit?

It has been 10 years since your diagnosis and the risk of your cancer recurring is far less than when you were initially diagnosed. Since then, you have been reviewed yearly. You have now completed your follow-up period and will now only be seen by the breast team at the hospital if you or your GP requests it. However, you will still receive support from us if you have any concerns and your GP will be able to easily refer you back to the hospital breast care team if it is required. Your GP will be informed of your discharge from routine follow-up.

Mammograms

We now recommend a mammogram every three years through the Scottish Breast Screening Service. You should contact the screening service to inform them that you have been discharged. You will be automatically called for a mammogram appointment from the age of 50-70. After the age of 70, you will need to make your own appointment. We recommend that you do this.

Breast Screening appointments: 0131 537 7411 / 7412

Breast Screening general enquiries: 0131 537 7410

Breast Awareness

Breast awareness is an important part of caring for yourself which involves becoming familiar with how your breasts look and feel. This will give you the confidence to recognise any changes and report them to your GP. We recommend that you examine your breasts once a month. Following surgery it is important to examine yourself. Pay particular attention to your treated breast(s), armpits and along your scar line. Remember to:

- Know what is normal for you
- Know what changes to look for (new lump or lumpiness, skin changes, swelling, changes to your scar)
- Look at and feel your breasts
- Report any changes without delay
- Attend for routine 3 yearly screening

Lymphoedema

Over time, there is a risk that fluid can collect in your breast tissue or arm, and may cause swelling. This is known as Lymphoedema. If you have a sudden onset of swelling, you should seek advice from your Breast Care Nurse Specialist.

Reducing your risk of Lymphoedema

- Look after and moisturise your skin
- Protect your skin from cuts, grazes and insect bites
- Protect your skin against sunburn and use a factor 50 sunscreen
- Watch for signs of infection (redness/warmth, painful swelling)
- Exercise and keep active
- Maintain a healthy weight.

Symptoms to look out for

Listed below are some symptoms to look out for and which you should report to your GP. They will then advise whether you need to be reviewed at the breast unit.

- New lumps in your breast(s) or arm pit
- New skin changes, puckering, change in breast shape, rash
- Changes in your scar line, rashes, lumps, new spots
- Lumps above your collar bone
- Unexplained vaginal bleeding
- Persistent back or bone pain
- Unexplained weight loss, sickness or poor appetite
- New headaches
- Unexplained shortness of breath or persistent cough
- Changes to the shape/feel of your breast implant.

Contacting the Edinburgh Breast Unit

As a unit we are still here to support you with any questions you may have relating to your previous diagnosis of breast cancer. However, your GP should be your first point of contact.

For a copy of this leaflet in a larger print, Braille or your community language, please telephone the department you have been treated in below.

Breast unit Admin telephone - 0131 537 1611
St John's Hospital - 01506 524047