

Enhanced Recovery Programme Breast Reconstruction



Your estimated discharge date is

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Enhanced Recovery Programme

Introduction

This information aims to increase your level of understanding of how you can play a part in your recovery after your surgery. If there is anything that you are unsure about, please ask. It is important that you understand how we can help yourself recover, so that you, your family and friends can be involved.

This is the programme offered by North Bristol NHS Trust for patients undergoing planned breast reconstruction surgery. There may be circumstances where the programme will not be appropriate for some patients and if this is the case, you will be fully informed.

What is the Enhanced Recovery Programme?

The aim of the Enhanced recovery Programme is to get you back to full health as quickly as possible after your operation.

Research indicates that after surgery, the earlier we get you out of bed, exercising, eating and drinking, your recovery will be quicker and it will be less likely that complications will develop.

Some of the benefits include:

- Reduced risk of wound infections.
- A quicker return to normality.
- A quicker return to usual mobility.
- Reduce risk of developing bloods clot after surgery.
- Leave hospital sooner.

In order to achieve this we need you to be partners with us so that we can work together to speed up your recovery.

What will happen?

Before you come into hospital

The specialist breast care nurse will have already discussed appropriate lifestyle behaviour. It is important that you understand what you need to do in order to ensure you are fit and safely prepared for surgery.

The nurse will discuss diet and exercise with you and returning to normal activities.

You will be given the opportunity to sample special nourishing supplement drinks: these are called fortijuce and fortisip. You will be given some of the drinks to take home with you even if your weight and appetite are normal. You can choose from a variety of flavours.

It is important to keep as active as you can before your operation.

Please bring a supply of your own medication into hospital with you. These will be stored safely on the ward and will be returned to you on discharge.

Please avoid taking anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen, Diclofenac or Naproxen up to one week before your operation.

As you are likely to be in hospital for up to four days, it is important that you remember to bring a few things in with you, or get a family member to bring them in for you. Things you will need:

- Night wear with buttons down the front.
- Slippers/dressing gown.
- Sports bra/support bra.
- Support pants [Large enough to cover abdominal scar].
- Toiletries [Including dry shampoo].

- Comfortable clothes to wear in the ward and home.
- Ipod, MP3 magazines and books.

A support/sports bra will be fitted on day one post surgery, you need to wear it for up to six weeks following breast reconstruction surgery. After Diep surgery, whilst in hospital you will need to wear support [spunks] pants to help support your abdomen and reduce some of the abdominal swelling, for up to six weeks.

Eating and drinking

Prior to your surgery you will be able to eat and drink as normal. It is important that you do not drink alcohol 48 hours before your operation.

In preparation for your operation and in addition to your normal diet, you should aim to take three of the supplement drinks per day, for each of the two days before admission. Each drink can be sipped over a few hours.

When you are admitted to the ward after your operation, the supplement drinks will continue to be available for you, and you will need to continue with three per day.

The supplement drinks are important to help with wound healing, to reduce the risks of infection and aid with your overall recovery. It is important that you also continue to have a variety of other drinks during your hospital stay.

As well as the supplement drinks mentioned, you will also be required to take special carbohydrate drinks called 'Pre-op' You will require two drinks the night before your operation. Once you're awake after your operation you may start to drink freely and we aim for you to be eating a light diet within six hours as tolerated. Food may be restricted for the first 24 hours in case you need to return to surgery. Staff will help and advice you with this. Diet and drinks needs to be caffeine free whilst in hospital. You will be expected to recommence the supplement drinks to help build up your strength following surgery.

Day of surgery

All patients are admitted on the day of surgery. A member of the surgical team looking after you will check that you are fully aware of your surgery and ensure you sign your consent form. If you are having a Diep the surgeon will then mark out on your skin where your abdominal vessels are, by using the ct scan report you have had done previously. A scan is not required to find vessels for patients who are having a tug.

In order to help prevent blood clots you will be required to wear special support stockings [Teds]. The nurse will need to measure your legs to obtain the correct size.

You will also be given a small injection called “clexane” at approximately 6pm each day you are in hospital. This helps reduce the risk of blood clots by thinning the blood.

It is important that you keep yourself warm before your operation and you are advised to dress accordingly [Warm dressing gown and slippers] you will be asked to remove these before surgery. It is normal practice for all patients to be taken directly into the operating theatre where the anaesthetist will be ready to meet you.

After your operation

When you return to the ward after your operation you will need to stay in bed for the first 24 hours. Patients who have had a Diep will be positioned in bed with your knees bent/flexed to help your abdomen relax. Patients who have had a tug reconstruction will have a pillow placed between their legs.

For the first 24-72 hours you will be closely monitored to ensure that your new breast[s] is healing and that you are recovering from the anaesthetic, this is an extremely tiring time for you.

You will expect to have:

- Urinary catheter.
- One venflon [needle] in the back of your hand for fluids.
- Drains will be placed in the operation site during surgery and these take off any excess fluid after surgery. They usually stay in for a couple of days.
- Dressings to your abdomen, breast or thigh. These will be changed if needed before you go home, otherwise they will be removed when you return as an outpatient.
- Oxygen for the first 24 hours via a face mask or nasal specs.
- Bear hugger which is a heated blanket which will be placed over your body for the first 24 hours to keep everything warm [This helps with the circulation of the new breast].
- You will also wear anti embolic stockings to prevent blood clots in your legs as well as Flotron booties on top of these.

Please see your progression chart for your daily goals for each day you are in hospital.

Complications

No surgery is without risk and complications but sometimes minor problems happen that need to be addressed. It is important that you are aware of signs and symptoms which may indicate a minor wound healing problem or infection.

- Redness/inflammation to scars which is spreading.
- Excessive oozing on dressing.
- Offensive smell from dressings.
- Increased pain in the area that has been operated on.

- Increased swelling to the area that has been operated on.
- Temperature and flu like symptoms feeling hot, cold or shivering.

You should contact your specialist nurse if you have any of the above symptoms as s/he may need to see you sooner in clinic than anticipated. If this is out of hours, contact the ward where you were a patient.

Discharge

Your dressing will not be changed unless instructed by your team before you leave hospital. Your dressings should stay on until you come back to the hospital for your clinic appointment, they should also remain dry, so no showering or bathing until after your appointment. You will be provided with iron medication and painkillers before you leave the hospital this should last for a week. It is important you take your medication regularly. You will be given follow-up appointments before you leave the hospital; this is usually with your specialist nurse or consultant.

Mobility

You should try and be as mobile as you can once you are home. You will find that you will also need to take regular rests at intervals which may mean you have to go back to bed for a couple of hours each day. This surgery can be very tiring for the first couple of weeks and then improve slowly. The physiotherapist will give you exercises to do once you are home, it is important to continue with the advice given to ensure you recover quickly and with full movement. We advise no heavy lifting, washing clothes etc. for up to four weeks after surgery. This allows all wounds and scars to heal without any added stress to the area.

Driving

You are not safe to drive for up to six weeks from the date of the surgery as this may affect your reconstruction recovery. You may also need to seek guidance from your insurance company. Some patients also wear a seat belt protector to help take the pressure off their chest and abdominal wounds.

Working

You will need to take time off work to recover from surgery. Depending on your job most patients take up to three months before returning to work. Some patients who work full time go back on a staged return to work, this can be discussed with your specialist nurse or consultant. You will be provided with sick notes as required.

Holidays

It is advised that you do not fly for four weeks [short haul] or six weeks [long haul] after surgery as you are at an increased risk of developing a blood clot (deep vein thrombosis). Please speak to your consultant or specialist nurse for advice if you are unsure. When you do fly it may be advisable to wear flight stockings.

References and further information

For further information on the Enhanced Recovery Programme you may access the following web sites:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/enhanced-recovery

www.dh.gov.uk

NHS Constitution. Information on your rights and responsibilities: **www.nhs.uk/aboutnhs/constitution**

**PATIENT
APPROVED** 

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www.nbt.nhs.uk

If you or the individual you are caring for need support reading this leaflet please ask a member of staff for advice.

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