

Signs and Symptoms to report:

- A lump or swelling in the breast, in the skin after a mastectomy, above the collar bone, in the neck, or under the arm
- Any skin changes, red areas or raised spots on the breast or mastectomy scar
- Nipple discharge
- Development of lymphedema
- Any new, persistent pain in any part of the body, especially in the back or hips, that does not improve with painkillers
- Unexplained weight loss and a loss of appetite
- A constant feeling of nausea
- Discomfort or swelling under the ribs or across the upper abdomen
- A dry cough or a feeling of breathlessness
- Severe headaches – usually worse in the morning.

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or

whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.

Twitter.com/WhitHealth
Facebook.com/WhittingtonHealth

Whittington Health NHS Trust
Magdala Avenue
London
N19 5NF
Phone: 020 7272 3070
www.whittington.nhs.uk

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A New Model of Patient Follow-Up after Breast Cancer Treatment

Supported
Self-management
Follow-up

Information for GPs

Helpline Number: 0207 288 3865
Breast CNS: 0207 288 5147 / 5374



Why are you sending me this leaflet?

You are being sent this leaflet because your patient has had treatment for breast cancer at our hospital. The patient has had their follow-up clinical appointment with one of our consultants and a Breast Nurse. Your Patient has been started on a supported self-management (SSM) follow-up pathway.

What is supported self-management follow-up?

It is a new form of follow-up at Whittington Health NHS Trust. Supported self-management replaces routine, clinical examination type appointments. It is a system where patients can call us if they have a problem and don't have to come to hospital at times when they are feeling well.

Why are you changing to supported self-management follow-up?

We have changed our system of follow-up because it is better for patients. It enables them to be more in charge of their own follow-up and prevents unnecessary hospital visits at a time when they may feel perfectly well. Patients often report that traditional clinical examination type follow-ups are a source of anxiety. Patients will have the contact details to alert hospital Staff of any new symptoms.

Also, evidence shows that most recurrences are identified by patients themselves in between routine appointments.

Are you the only hospital to have a supported self-management model of follow-up?

No (although it may be called different things in different places). More and more hospitals across the country are changing the way patients are followed up after treatment for breast cancer.

What information has my patient been given?

They have had a consultation which covered the following topics:

- Their diagnosis
- The treatment they had and some of the possible side effects
- Signs and symptoms to report
- Where to find further help and support
- They have also been given written information on these topics.

Will my patient still be able to access the breast service?

Yes. Patients will be able to call the dedicated Helpline 0207 288 3865 (Wed-Fri) and Breast Nurse 0207 288 5147 / 5374 if they have any queries or problems, and they are encouraged to do so.

This telephone number is monitored regularly between 0900 and 1700, Monday to Friday and the patient will be phoned back by a Breast Nurse within two working days of leaving a message. If the Breast Nurse feels that it would be appropriate for the patient to come back to clinic to be seen, an appointment will be offered within 14 days of the telephone call.

How does this affect me?

It is unlikely that you will need to do anything different than you would already do for your patients after they have completed treatment for breast cancer. The attached **letter and treatment summary** gives details of the medication that you will need to continue to prescribe for your patient, as well as any additional tests that you may need to arrange for them.

Will my patient continue to have routine postoperative investigations?

Yes. They will be re-called routinely in one year till five years post treatment. At the end of five years, they will re-join the standard NHS Breast Screening Programme. If they are still below 50 years, they will continue to have annual mammograms until they reach 50, when they will join the national screening programme.