

AMANITA BREAST CARE SPECIALISTS

Use your arm for daily activities

Arm & Shoulder exercises will help you regain normal movement and maintain normal circulation. An exercise sheet is available from Amanita.

It is important to use your arm normally both to assist the return to full movement and to lessen problems such as shoulder stiffness, muscle weakness, skin and muscle tightening.

Suggestions given below may prevent the occurrence of Lymphoedema

1. Use your arm and shoulder in as normal movements as possible.
2. Use both arms during activities, just as you did before surgery
3. Avoid over using your arm.
4. While your arm is regaining strength avoid carrying heavy objects.
5. Get into the habit of carrying your handbag on your non operated side
6. Be careful cutting fingernails
7. Moisturise your skin to prevent cracks and splits.
8. The arm on your operated side should not be used for measuring blood pressure, taking blood, giving injections or inserting drips.
9. Seek medical advice if your arm or hand feels very uncomfortable, or if there is swelling, redness or any signs of infection.

THIS LEAFLET HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR WOMEN WHO HAVE RECEIVED SURGERY ON THE LYMPH GLANDS UNDER THE ARM FOR BREAST CANCER

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LYMPHOEDEMA

Lymph is the colourless fluid that carries the blood through a network of vessels. Lymph nodes filter the fluid to remove particles not welcome in the blood. If removed, the body compensates by increasing lymph vessels in the area. However, if lymph vessels are overloaded, lymphoedema causing the swelling known as lymphoedema.

Why is lymphoedema associated with breast cancer?

If cancer cells have begun to spread, the lymph nodes under the arm must be removed but, at the same time, the lymph nodes they are affected is to remove (sentinel node dissection) so they can be located. In these places women at increased risk of lymphoedema. It is hoped that a relatively new technique will reduce this risk. A sentinel node biopsy to identify the node or nodes likely to be affected. Other nodes are unlikely to be removed. Sentinel Node Biopsy and Radiotherapy to the armpit also reduce the risk of making this another risk factor.

Swelling and "odd sensations" of lymphoedema.

After surgery, it is normal for there to be swelling of the upper arm and the breast or chest. As the nerves begin to repair, there may be odd and uncomfortable sensations. It is normal to feel that the skin has been stretched. Swelling may occur in the breast or chest wall.

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