

Male Mastectomy

B13 Lite - Expires end of January 2025



This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

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What is breast cancer?

Breast cancer is a harmful growth that starts in the glandular tissue of your breast.

What is a mastectomy?

A mastectomy involves removing all of your breast, usually including your nipple. As well as removing your breast tissue, your surgeon may remove lymph nodes in your armpit to find out if there are any cancer cells in them.

What are the benefits of surgery?

Removing the cancer by surgery gives the best chance of you being free of early breast cancer. The breast tissue and lymph nodes that your surgeon removes will be examined under a microscope to help decide on any further treatment.

Are there any alternatives to a mastectomy?

If you have invasive breast cancer (which means the cancer cells may spread), there are other treatment available such as hormone therapy, chemotherapy, radiotherapy and biological therapy.

What does the operation involve?

The operation is performed under a general anaesthetic and takes 1 to 2 hours.

Your surgeon will make a cut on your breast to include the nipple and remove your breast tissue.

Your surgeon will remove any lymph nodes from your armpit usually through the same cut.

Your chest on the side of the operation will be flat. Your wound should heal to a faint line across the side of your chest.

All your breast tissue and lymph nodes that have been removed will be examined under a microscope. Your surgeon will know the results 1 to 2 weeks later.

What complications can happen?

Some complications can be serious and can even cause death.

General complications of any operation

- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication
- Blood clot in your leg
- Blood clot in your lung
- Chest infection

Specific complications of this operation

- Developing a lump under your wound caused by fluid collecting
- Developing a lump under your wound caused by blood collecting
- Numbness or continued pain around your armpit or the inner part of your arm
- Skin necrosis, where some of the skin at the edge of your wound dies leaving a black area
- Stiff shoulder
- Arm weakness or swelling of your arm and hand
- Asymmetry (different-shaped chest on either side)
- Dissatisfaction with the appearance of your chest over time

Consequences of this procedure

- Pain
- Unsightly scarring of your skin

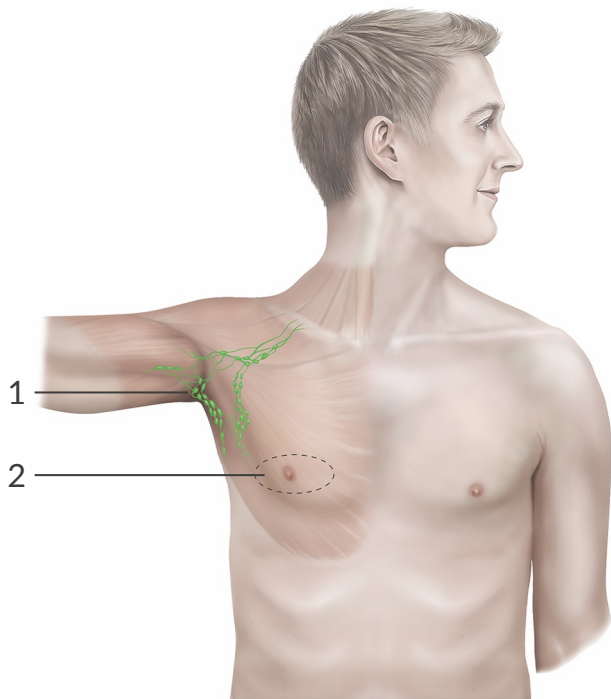
How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home the same day or the following day.

You should be able to return to normal activities after 2 to 3 weeks.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

The healthcare team will arrange for you to come back to the clinic within 3 weeks. The breast tissue and lymph nodes that your surgeon



The male breast

1. Lymph nodes
2. Area that the surgeon will cut

removed will have been examined under a microscope. Your healthcare team will tell you the results and discuss with you any treatment or follow-up you need. They will also be able to tell you when you can return to work.

Breast cancer may come back despite the best available treatment.

Summary

Surgery gives the best chance of you being free of early breast cancer. A mastectomy involves removing all your breast tissue. It usually involves removing some or most of the lymph nodes in your armpit, which helps your healthcare team to decide on any further treatment.

Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.

Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you, and they may be able to tell you about any other suitable treatments options.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant healthcare team would give you.

Acknowledgements

Reviewer

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Illustrator

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