



## Breast Care Nurse Team

# A Guide to your Breast Prosthesis Appointment

### Welcome to your Prosthesis Appointment

During your prosthesis appointment you will be seen by a trained prosthesis fitter, who will be able to advise the best shape and size for you. She will also be able to give you advice on the maintenance of your prosthesis. This appointment will take approximately 30 minutes.

### Do I need a prosthesis?

It is normal for many women feel very self-conscious after their mastectomy. You may worry that other people will be able to tell what operation you have had and that your clothes no longer look or fit as they did before. However, this anxiety can be reduced by wearing a prosthesis, which will restore your original shape and help you feel more confident. Alternatively, some women choose not to wear a prosthesis because they have adjusted to their new body shape. You may want to talk with a Breast Nurse Specialist and/or your partner about these options. Please remember that your decision to wear (or not wear) a prosthesis is not final. You can always change your mind.

### Before Your Appointment

To ensure that a good cosmetic effect is achieved, it is vital to have a well-fitting bra that meets the following criteria:

- Your existing breast should fill the cup completely and comfortably (this ensures that we can match a breast prosthesis exactly to your existing breast)
- The bra should have a wide central seam that covers the point where your natural cleavage starts
- None of your natural breast tissue should be visible outside the bra cup (if it is, the breast prosthesis will also be visible)
- The bra should have supportive straps and a wide back fastening

It is a good idea to try on several bras at a good retailer to find the best fit. Try sizes above and below your normal size to see if they fit better and meet the above criteria.

### About Your Appointment

When you attend your fitting it is a good idea to bring or wear a plain coloured T-shirt or top. This will help you choose a prosthesis that will give you a smooth outline. You may also want to bring a favourite bra or swimsuit that you would still like to wear.

You may wish to bring a friend or partner along for support and also help with choosing the correct prosthesis as a second opinion can be helpful.

The fitting appointment will be held at the Diabetes Centre, 50 Bridport Road, Dorchester, DT1 2NQ. There is a pay and display car park at the Diabetes Centre. However, if there are no spaces, there is free parking on Bridport Road for up to 1 hour.

### **What if I have made the wrong choice?**

If this is the case, please do not worry. It is not until you go home and try on different clothes that you can be certain your prosthesis is the right shape and fits correctly. You may return the prosthesis within 2 weeks, so long as it is in good (like new) condition and it has not been damaged. You may then book another fitting appointment. Please do not hesitate to ring Hayley Shanahan on 01305 254450 to discuss returning your prosthesis.

### **Can I wear my prosthesis whilst swimming?**

Yes, you can swim whilst wearing your prosthesis. However, if you are a regular swimmer it may be advisable to buy a swimming prosthesis as chlorine may cause damage to standard prostheses.

### **Caring for your prosthesis**

Please treat the prosthesis like your own skin. Wash it with warm soapy water and dry it with a towel. When not wearing it for long periods, place it in the storage box provided, which will help to retain its shape.

### **Can I have more than one prosthesis?**

We can only supply 1 prosthesis free of charge. However, you are welcome to purchase an additional one if you so wish, but this is not usually necessary.

### **How often can I have a replacement prosthesis?**

Your prosthesis can be replaced free of charge once its warranty runs out- this is usually after 2-3 years. If you gain or lose a significant amount of weight; or there is a manufacturing fault and the prosthesis is still under warranty, it may be possible to replace it at no cost sooner. However, if the damage is not due to normal wear and tear, a cost will be charged for replacement.

If you have any queries regarding your appointment or prosthesis, please do not hesitate to call Hayley Shanahan 01305 254450.

#### **Breast Nurse Specialists:**

Lorraine Sers                      01305 255160  
Katy Kennedy  
Anne Saunders

#### **Appointment Enquiries:**

Hayley Shanahan                      01305 254450

### **About this leaflet:**

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If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email [pals@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@dchft.nhs.uk)



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