

Plastic Surgery – Breast Reconstruction



My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the ability for the NHS to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place.

Our waiting lists have been clinically reviewed to ensure patients are seen in priority order and we continue to monitor these lists. This may mean you wait longer for your care, but we will be in touch as soon as possible with details of your appointment.

This document provides you with information on how you can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital. The guidance has been written by clinicians who are responsible for your care.

Breast reconstruction surgery has recommenced, but we are managing a significant backlog of patients due to our response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please read the following information in conjunction with our staying healthy guidance.

Guidance for patients

Breast reconstruction is surgery to make a new breast shape that looks as much as possible like your other breast. Reconstruction can be done at the same time as a mastectomy (immediate reconstruction), or it can be done later (delayed reconstruction). It can be done either by inserting a breast implant or by using tissue from another part of your body to create a new breast.

You need to ensure that your body mass index (BMI) does not increase whilst you wait for your surgery. Generally, your BMI should be less than 30 at the time of surgery, unless your surgeon has set a different maximum limit. You can calculate your BMI using this link: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/bmi-calculator/>. If your BMI does increase to a high level that will make your surgery unsafe, then your procedure may be cancelled on the day of your surgery.

Aim to keep yourself physically fit prior to the procedure as this will aid your recovery from surgery.

If you no longer wish to proceed with this surgery, please let the administrative team know on the below number in the Contact Us section.

If you have any long-standing conditions you should get this reviewed at your doctor's surgery to make sure it remains well controlled. This will also help prevent any unnecessary delays when you come for your pre-operative assessment. Maintaining a well-balanced diet is also important, as is reducing any excessive weight that may be impacting on your general health. If you are a current smoker it would be advisable to seek support to help with stopping, advice can be found at your local pharmacy or doctor's surgery.

Further links which may help you manage your condition whilst you await treatment;

- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/>
- <https://www.patientaccess.com/> (Connect to your GP services online)
- <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/>

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What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If you have any specific concerns about your surgery, you are advised to contact your breast reconstruction team for support.

Urgent health advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit www.nhs.uk. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Life threatening emergencies

For something life threatening – severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999.

GP surgeries are still open

If you experience an increase in pain, inability to weight bear on this limb or a significant reduction in mobility, you should in the first instance contact your GP for review and advice.

GP surgeries are still open and are working differently to how they did before the COVID-19 pandemic. GP practices continue to make best use of telephone, online and video consultations. Face-to-face appointments are still being given to those who need it.

When you phone or use an online form to contact your GP surgery to make an appointment, you will be asked some questions which are designed to help staff guide you to the most appropriate clinical person to help you with your condition. This could be a nurse, clinical pharmacist, physician's associate, GP or paramedic

Contact Us

To change or cancel your appointment please call:

For Luton & Dunstable Hospital – 01582 561385 (Monday to Friday from 09.00am to 5pm)

For Bedford Hospital – 01234 792172 (Monday to Friday from 09.00am to 5pm)

Alternatively, you can visit our website to request a change to your appointment here:

Luton Site: <https://www.bedfordshirehospitals.nhs.uk/change-cancel-appointment/change-cancel-appointment-luton-and-dunstable-university-hospital/>

Bedford site: [Change / Cancel Your Appointment | Bedford Hospital \(bedfordshirehospitals.nhs.uk\)](https://www.bedfordshirehospitals.nhs.uk/change-cancel-appointment/change-cancel-appointment-bedford-hospital/)

To change or cancel your surgery admission date, please telephone the contact number on your admission letter between 09:00 – 17:00 Monday to Friday.

For any other queries, please call or email your consultant's secretary. Their contact details will be on the most recent letter from your consultant.