

## **Information regarding your admission & surgery & post-op care.**

**Please keep this document**

### **BEFORE ADMISSION**

#### **1. AUTHORIZATION FOR PROCEDURE**

Please note that even though we sent the motivational letter to your medical aid, it remains your responsibility to phone them to follow up and obtain authorization.

#### **2. ADMISSION TIME etc.**

- Admission time and other arrangements such as when last eat or drink, will be communicated to you.
- *If you are admitted to Groenkloof Hospital or another hospital outside Cintocare, Dr L van Schalkwyk's room will arrange this with you.*

#### **3. SPECIALIST PHYSICIAN**

- You will need to see a Physician before the surgery. The physician will declare you fit for surgery and will also be looking after you in-hospital post-operatively.
- The appointment will be arranged by either Dr. L van Schalkwyk's rooms or Dr J. van Heerden's rooms, depending on where your surgery will take place.
- You may need to have blood drawn before your visit with the Physician.

#### **4. SENTINEL LYMPH NODE MAPPING**

- This will either be done at Life Groenkloof Hospital or at Netcare Pretoria East Hospital, depending on where the surgery will take place.
- Mapping will either be done in the afternoon before your procedure, or the morning of the surgery. This will be communicated to you.

**Important:** You do not need to phone your medical aid for authorization, the Nuclear Department that does the test will do it on your behalf.

#### ***What is a sentinel lymph node?***

A sentinel lymph node is defined as the first lymph node to which cancer cells are most likely to spread from a primary tumour. Sometimes, there can be more than one sentinel lymph node.

#### ***What is sentinel lymph node mapping?***

A reactive substance is injected in the tumour or near the tumour or under the nipple. This substance spreads to the lymph nodes via the lymphatic vessels. In theatre, a device is used to detect the reactive substance and the sentinel lymph node can be correctly identified. This lymph node(s) will be checked for the presence of cancer cells by a pathologist.

## 5. CLOTHING

- Try to bring sleepwear that has buttons in the front. It will make dressing easier for you.

## ADMISSION TO CINTOCARE

1. Admission at Cintocare is at reception on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor.
2. Please note that Cintocare is CASH FREE
3. Cintocare is a SMOKE FREE environment.
4. Operating hours for Main Entrance Door: 06h00 – 18h00. Make use of the vehicle entrance after hours
5. Should you require a special arrangement regarding visiting hours, please contact the hospital: 012 945 300. Our rooms cannot arrange this on your behalf.

## IN-HOSPITAL

### 1. POST-OPERATIVE BRA

The day after surgery: Someone from **the M-Store** will come and fit you with a post-operative bra. **Normally, you will be supplied with x2 bras.**

- These bra's must be worn 24/7 for 6 weeks

Reason for bra: provide firm support, help reduce swelling and assist in preventing the formation of seromas (Fluid build-up between the tissue layers)

### 2. You will receive a BOX with the following:

- Discharge form with important information – please read carefully.
- Prescription for medication
- Scar cream and x1 roll of Micropore tape (**we will explain usage after removal of stitches**)
- Leaflet from the M-Store on how to take care of your post-operative bra.
- A warranty card for your permanent breast implants (**refer to discharge info**)

### 3. DRAINS

You will wake up with a drain in each breast. Sometimes, there might be a third drain.

**Reason for drains:** All wounds go through an inflammatory phase where the body makes fluid to 'clean' the wounds. Drains allow enough moisture to remain in the tissues to promote healing, while also removing excess fluid that may hinder the healing process.

**Important:** A video will be sent to you via WhatsApp. This video will show you how to empty your drains. This is ONLY applicable to you if you are discharged with drains.

- Link: <https://youtu.be/chUt5JJUXI0>

#### 4. **WOUND DRESSINGS**

- You might wake up with a specialized dressing. It is called PICO 7Y. It helps to reduce swelling and assists in wound healing. **This dressing is only used for certain patients, and it also depended on your medical aid.**
- This dressing must stay on for 7 days.
- Please see below a picture of what this looks like.
- PLEASE NOTE – further communication regarding this will be given to you, should the dressing be used.



### **ON DISCHARGE**

1. **MEDICATION:** due to legislation, Cintocare’s pharmacy only serves ‘in-hospital patients’. You are welcome to make use of the link to Clicks Pharmacy in the mall, or the Pharmacy of your choice.

**NB: It is normal to experience constipation when using pain medication. You can buy over the counter medication such as Dulcolax (if not already prescribed). Duphalac Syrup is prescribed by Dr. van Heerden under the “Optional” medication if needed.**

2. **DRAINS:** Empty drains ONLY ONCE a day. Preferably in the morning.

- Whatsapp the volume to our practice cell number: 066 152 8919
- We will let you know when to come in to have the drains removed.
- We will most likely change your dressings at the same time (Except for PICO 7Y)

**NB: it is normal for the colour of the fluid to change. It can be light red, dark red, light yellow, dark yellow and even have an orange tint. Sometime small fat deposits are seen in the pipes – this is normal.**

3. **POST-OPERATIVE BRA:** refer to the leaflet in your box of how to take care of your bra. If you need a new bra or have any queries, contact M-Store directly – **refer to Discharge document for their info.**

#### 4. **PAIN**

*The following is normal:*

- sharp shooting pains, burning sensation, pins and needles, heavy feeling, “milk coming in” sensations, pulling sensations, itching in the chest wall, shoulder pain, numbness.

Pain with Expanders: It is also normal to experience discomfort when the swelling subsides. The port becomes more palpable, the folds of the expander becomes more visible.

## 5. **SWELLING**

- It is normal for one breast to be more swollen than the other.
- If severe and extremely painful – contact the rooms for an urgent appointment or visit the emergency department over weekends/after hours – they will notify Dr. van Heerden or Dr. van Schalkwyk.
- It is normal for the scars/suture line to be swollen and red.

## 6. **SUTURES**

- Sutures are removed after 3 weeks or longer if indicated. They are normally blue in colour
- In the deep tissue layers, dissolvable sutures are used.

## 7. **SEROMA**

### ***What is a seroma?***

Seroma is a potential complication following breast cancer surgery that affects up to 51% of women who have a mastectomy or axillary (armpit) lymph node dissection.

### ***What causes a seroma?***

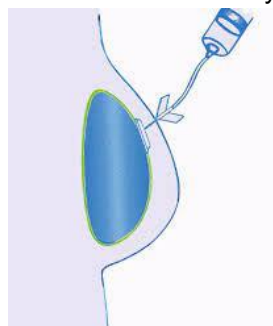
Seromas are the most common complication of breast cancer surgery. Fluid, may build up under the skin in the spaces where tumours, breast tissue, fat and axillary lymph nodes were cut out. Seromas often result after drains are removed. Although the body generally tends to reabsorb this fluid, sometimes the body cannot and it will need to be drained in the rooms on your follow-up appointment.

## 8. **EXPANSION WITH THE BREAST EXPANDER**

- If you have tissue/breast expanders, expansion will be done on the day your sutures are removed (3 weeks post-op)
- It is then done every 2-3 weeks until you are satisfied with the size.
- Expansion is **not done** while you receive radiotherapy. It is safe to expand when receiving chemotherapy.

### ***How does it feel when expanding?***

1. Some patients have no feeling
2. Mild discomfort like drawing of blood
3. Some patients reports that it feels similar to when they breastfed – like their ‘milk is coming in’

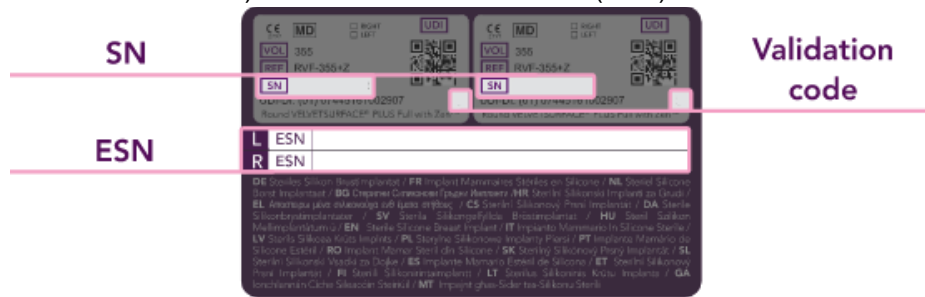


### **How long after the 1<sup>st</sup> Procedure can the FINAL reconstruction be done?**

1. If no chemo- or radiotherapy post-operative – 3 months after the initial surgery
2. After completion of chemo-therapy – 4-6 months
3. After radiotherapy – 6 months

## 9. Warranty card for PERMANENT IMPLANTS ONLY

- You can register your implants on the Motiva Imagine App by using the SN (serial number) or Electronic Serial Number (ESN)



## 10. SCAR MANAGEMENT

- You will be given advice on scar management when your sutures are removed.

## 11. SIGNS TO WATCH OUT FOR

1. Abnormal or sudden swelling of a breast
2. A breast that is suddenly becomes warm and red.
3. Blueish color of an eminent extruding expander or implant – this only happens in very rare and exceptional circumstances.

## 12. WHAT NOT TO DO AFTER THE OPERATION

1. For 3 weeks: no driving yourself. You may travel in a car as a passenger.
2. For 6 weeks: no picking up, moving around or carrying heavy objects such as: carrying grocery bags and doing housework. **NO EXERCISE.**
  - If you have small children, sit on a chair, and allow them to climb into your lap.
3. Keep your dressings dry until instructed otherwise.
  - Wash your hair and body very carefully over a basin and **DO NOT** let dressings get soaked.
  - If dressing get wet – use a hairdryer on the **COLD** setting to blow-dry dressings.

## 13. WHAT YOU MAY DO

1. Lift your arms above your head to comb your hair or to dress yourself
2. Shave your armpits
3. Apply deodorant
4. Sleep on your side if you can tolerate it.

## 14. ACCOUNTS

1. Please note that Dr Johan van Heerden is not contracted in with your medical aid and shortfalls will be liable by you.
2. The following can be requested before your surgery:
  - a quotation of Dr Johan van Heerden's fee for the procedure
  - an estimate of what your co-payment might be.
3. GAP Cover: it remains your responsibility to submit your final account to your GAP cover.

Accounts are not managed by the rooms nor by Dr Johan van Heerden. Should you have an account query, you may contact **Annelize Beneke: 082 305 1689 / [acc.johanvh@gmail.com](mailto:acc.johanvh@gmail.com)**  
If you are unable to reach her: please send her a whatsapp to call you back.

**15. CO-PAYMENT TO CINTOCARE**

1. Please be aware that Cintocare may not be a DSP (Designated Service Provider) for your medical aid and that you may have to make a co-payment.
2. In certain circumstances, Cintocare accommodates patients to waive the co-payment for the initial surgery.
3. Please keep in mind that should you need to be taken to theatre again due to a complication or another reason, you may have to make co-payment.
4. Dr Johan van Heerden does not have a theatre list at another hospital and although we try to accommodate patients as we can, it is not always possible to obtain a list at another hospital.