

**Macmillan breast care nurses** are available,  
Monday to Friday from 09.00 – 17.00 hours.

**Alison Gent**, Macmillan breast care  
nurse, surgery **020 8725 4745**  
(with answerphone)

**Ali Woods**, Macmillan breast care  
nurse, surgery **020 8725 1223**  
(with answerphone)  
(Wednesday – Friday)

**Charmaine Case**, Macmillan breast  
care nurse, oncology **020 8725 2154**  
(with answerphone)

Please leave a message and they will return your call.  
For urgent calls, you can contact them directly by calling the  
main switchboard on **020 8672 1255** and ask for Alison on  
Bleep **7433** Ali on Bleep **6056** or Charmaine on Bleep **6113**

## Breast Cancer

An information leaflet  
for patients

Department of Breast Surgery  
and Oncology

Revised Nov 2013 (review Nov 2015)



**St George's Healthcare NHS Trust**  
St George's Hospital  
Blackshaw Road  
London  
SW17 0QT  
**Tel: 020 8672 1255**  
**Website: [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

Job Ref: 08446

## Introduction

Being diagnosed with breast cancer can be a confusing and bewildering experience. You will meet many professionals involved with different aspects of your care. It is common to feel overwhelmed by the information you receive about breast cancer, investigations required and the treatment options. You may have many questions but it can be difficult knowing where to start.

At diagnosis, we will give you the name of your **key worker** at St George's. This will usually be your Macmillan breast care nurse. Your key worker will co-ordinate your care and is your main point of contact for any worries you may have.

Throughout your treatment you will be offered a permanent record or summary of consultations between yourself and the doctor. This will normally be a copy of the letter sent to your GP. If you do not get offered this please ask your doctor or clinic staff. Once you have decided that you wish to receive these letters, this will continue until you inform the hospital that you do not want them anymore.

This booklet explains the role of the different members of the clinical team looking after you and how to contact them. It also provides details of where to go for further information and advice. We hope you find it helpful and would welcome your comments so that we can improve future editions.

Your Key Worker is \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number \_\_\_\_\_

## Useful telephone numbers

### St George's Hospital

Switchboard	020 8672 1255
Surgical Secretaries	020 8725 3082 / 3083
Pre admission unit	020 8725 6909
Gray Ward	020 8725 3194
Keate Ward	020 8725 3227
Oncology Secretary	020 8725 2955
Trevor Howell Day Unit	020 8725 0519
Trevor Howell (Oncology Ward)	020 8725 1083/2
Acute Oncology Service (AOS) ask for the senior nurse on: (Monday to Friday, 9.00 to 17.00)	020 8672 1255 bleep 8226
Macmillan Information and Support Centre	020 8725 2677
Macmillan Citizens Advice Bureau adviser	020 7042 0320
Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)	020 8725 2453

### Royal Marsden Hospital

Switchboard – Chelsea	020 7352 8171
Switchboard – Sutton	020 8642 6011

### Other numbers

Macmillan Cancer Support	0808 808 0000
Paul's Cancer Support Centre	020 7924 3924
South East Cancer Help Centre	020 8668 0974
The London Breast Cancer Haven	020 7384 0099
St Raphael's Hospice	020 8335 4575
Trinity Hospice	020 7787 1000
St Christopher's Hospice	020 8778 9252

## Who will be looking after me?

The team of people looking after you is called the multidisciplinary team (MDT). The members of the breast MDT are experts at treating and managing breast cancer. They are involved with your investigations, diagnosis and treatment options, and supportive care.

The breast cancer team includes:

**Macmillan breast care nurses**

**Breast surgeons**

**Advanced nurse practitioners**

**Breast clinician**

**Radiologists**

**Medical oncologists**

**Clinical oncologists**

The team members meet every week to discuss treatment plans for all the patients. The decisions are then recorded in your medical records.

You may also meet other different specialists throughout your treatment and to help you, the following pages give details of some of the key people you may encounter and what they do.

### Macmillan breast care nurses

The Macmillan breast care nurses are available to see all patients with breast cancer and their families.

The role of the breast care nurses is to listen to your concerns and to help answer your questions. They can discuss your diagnosis and treatment, and help you understand the care suggested by your doctors.

The nurses are available in the hospital or by telephone from Monday to Friday from 09.00 until 17.00 hours.

**Alison Gent**, Macmillan breast care nurse, surgery **020 8725 4745**  
(with answerphone)

**Ali Woods**, Macmillan breast care nurse, surgery **020 8725 1223**  
(with answerphone)

**Charmaine Case**, Macmillan breast care nurse, oncology **020 8725 2154**  
(with answerphone)

During clinics, they will not be able to take calls, so please leave a message and they will return your call later. If you have an **urgent** query, you can contact them directly by calling the main switchboard on **020 8672 1255** and ask for Alison on Bleep **7433**, Ali on Bleep **6056** or Charmaine on Bleep **6113**.

Patients, their families or close friends, may also need time to talk about what is happening, even where there are no clear answers. The breast care nurses are also able to give practical advice on coping with your illness and its treatment.

You may also want practical advice on:

- coping with your illness
- the treatment and the effects on your day-to-day activities
- how to talk to family, friends or work colleagues
- help with financial, work and housing problems
- help at home.

### **Macmillan Cancer Support**

89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7UQ

Helpline: **0808 808 00 00** (freephone)

Website: [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

They provide free information and emotional support for people living with cancer and can tell you about local cancer support groups and organisations near you.

The Helpline also offers information on benefits and financial help for people affected by cancer.

### **Cancer Research UK**

PO Box 123, London WC2A 3PX

**Cancer Information Service:**

**020 7061 8355** or **0800 226237** (freephone)

Website: [www.cancerresearchuk.org/cancer-help/](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/cancer-help/)

Trained cancer nurses can give information and support relating to cancer and its treatments. Publications are available and their website has information on specific cancers.

### **Royal Marsden Hospital**

Website: [www.royalmarsden.nhs.uk](http://www.royalmarsden.nhs.uk)

### **Breast Cancer Care**

Helpline: **0808 800 6000**

Website: [www.breastcancercare.org.uk](http://www.breastcancercare.org.uk)

A national organisation offering support and information to those affected by breast cancer. It is a free, confidential service delivered by health care professionals and trained volunteers. Services include a national helpline, publications, and practical and emotional support on a one-to-one or group basis.

### **Paul's Cancer Support Centre**

20-22 York Road, London SW11 3QA  
(near Clapham Junction)

Tel: **020 7924 3924**

Website: [www.paulscancersupportcentre.org.uk](http://www.paulscancersupportcentre.org.uk)

It provides support, information, complementary therapies, and groups and classes to people with cancer, their families and friends. There is also a home visiting service that can provide trained volunteers for befriending, massage and reflexology.

### **South East Cancer Help Centre**

2 Purley Road, (Tesco Development), Purley CR8 2HA

Tel: **020 8668 0974**

Website: [www.sechc.org.uk/](http://www.sechc.org.uk/)

It provides support, information and complementary therapies to people with cancer, their families and friends.

### **The London Breast Cancer Haven**

Tel: **020 7384 0099**

Website: [www.thehaven.org.uk](http://www.thehaven.org.uk)

The Haven is situated in Fulham and provides support for people affected by breast cancer. It offers information, advice, support groups, counselling and complimentary therapies.

### **Breast surgeons**

Surgery is usually the first treatment for most cases of breast cancer. The specialist breast surgeons and their team of doctors will discuss surgical options with you before offering you a date for treatment.

However, for some people, chemotherapy (drug treatment) or hormone therapy may be offered first. This is to shrink the tumour so that more conservative surgery may be performed.

### **Advanced nurse practitioners**

There are two advanced nurse practitioners who work as independent practitioners within the breast unit. They assess new patients, arrange and perform investigations and inform people of their diagnosis. They also manage breast cancer follow-up clinics.

### **Breast clinician**

The breast clinician is a doctor who also assesses new patients, arranging and performing investigations, and informing patients of their diagnosis. She also manages breast cancer follow-up clinics and advises the team about Family History referrals. The breast clinician looks after the high risk Family History patients in the Department of Clinical Genetics.

### **Radiologists**

You are likely to require imaging (mammograms and ultrasounds) as part of your diagnostic process or as part of your follow-up. Specialist consultant radiologists perform and report on breast investigations and work with your breast surgeons and oncologists. Occasionally, image-guided biopsies may be needed to obtain samples of tissue to make a diagnosis. If a tumour is too small to feel easily, it may be necessary for the radiologists to place small wires in your breast as a guide for the surgeons.

### Medical oncologist

Chemotherapy (drug treatment) and hormonal therapy are often used in the treatment of breast cancer. Specialist doctors called medical oncologists look after patients undergoing chemotherapy, other anti-cancer drugs and hormone therapy.

### Clinical oncologists

Many patients will be offered radiotherapy, which is the use of high energy x-rays to treat breast cancer. If you have radiotherapy, you will be cared for by specialist consultant doctors called clinical oncologists. These doctors work partly here at St George's and partly at The Royal Marsden Hospital.

### Other professionals

Your consultant is in overall charge and supervises the work of a team of doctors. You may also meet other different specialists throughout your treatment who may be able to help you with specific problems. For example:

- surgical appliance officer
- physiotherapist
- inpatient occupational therapist
- oncology counsellor
- spiritual care worker
- hospital palliative care teams
- community palliative care teams

If you feel it would be useful to meet any of these people, please discuss it with your nurse specialist or other members of the team.

## Where can I find additional information and support?

### Macmillan Information and Support Centre

The centre offers a wide range of information and support to people with cancer, their families and friends.

Information is available about:

- cancer, its treatments and their effects
- cancer services
- complementary therapies
- support services within St George's and local self-help and support groups.

You are welcome to 'drop in' to the centre or get in touch by phone on **020 8725 2677**. Staff are available to guide you through the information and to offer you any advice and support you may need. The centre is on the ground floor in Grosvenor Wing.

You and your family may find that cancer has an effect on your financial situation. You may want to talk to your key worker or specialist nurse about what help is available. We also have a specialist **Macmillan Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) adviser**. You can contact the advisor for free, confidential welfare benefits and money advice. To book an appointment, please call **020 7042 0320**.

If you are working and require a sick certificate you can obtain this from your GP.

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS at St George's is a patient friendly, easy-to-access service designed to provide patients, relatives and carers with information and advice about our services. The Service is available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm in person or by telephone (**020 8725 2453**), fax or email [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

and you may hear this called an 'information prescription'. When you have chemotherapy, you will be given an 'alert card' telling you what symptoms to look out for.

If you feel unwell during chemotherapy or within six weeks of finishing treatment, you must contact our **Acute Oncology Service** immediately.

You can contact our Acute Oncology Service between 09.00 and 17.00. Telephone St George's Hospital on **020 8672 1255** and ask for the **Acute Oncology Service (AOS) senior nurse on Bleep 8226**.

At any other time, ring the hospital switchboard on **020 8672 1255** and ask for the **Specialist Registrar for Oncology**.

### Free prescriptions

People undergoing treatment for cancer and the effects of cancer treatment are eligible for free prescriptions. You can apply for an exemption certificate by collecting a form **FP92A** from your GP surgery.

### Will I take part in research?

Research is an important part of our work, making sure that the treatments we give are up-to-date and effective. We are constantly trying to improve treatments. You may be asked if you would like to be included in a clinical trial. Research nurses work very closely with the doctors and will help to explain and answer your questions about the proposed trial. You do not have to take part in any trials if you do not want to. This decision will not affect any of the care you receive.

### Surgical appliance officer

The surgical appliance officer is available to provide a service for cancer patients requiring breast prostheses and for patients requiring a wig for hair loss following chemotherapy. You can be referred by your breast care nurse.

### Physiotherapist

A physiotherapist will see you whilst you are in hospital for surgery, if you are having an axillary node clearance. Some patients may need to be referred to the physiotherapist as an outpatient.

### Inpatient occupational therapist

The Macmillan occupational therapist can support patients with physical, emotional or social problems to help them carry out day-to-day activities safely.

### Oncology counsellor

A trained counsellor is available to patients receiving chemotherapy and their families. Many patients find that it can be very helpful to talk to a counsellor about issues that are troubling or distressing them. The counsellor is also able to see relatives and carers of patients. If you feel it would be helpful to meet the counsellor, please talk to your Macmillan nurse specialist or contact the counsellor directly on **020 8725 4681**.

### Spiritual care

The multi-faith Chaplaincy team at St George's Hospital offers spiritual, religious and pastoral care to patients, carers and visitors. You can contact them through any member of staff and you are welcome to visit the chapel on the ground floor of St James Wing.

## Hospital palliative care team

You have access to the palliative care team at St George's Hospital. Palliative care focuses on the physical and psychological needs of patients and their families. This can involve helping you to cope with symptoms such as pain, nausea and vomiting, or the anxiety and worry that can be part of your illness.

You can ask to see the palliative care team at any time during your care. Contact them on 020 8725 3311, Monday to Friday, 08.30 until 16.30 hours.

## Community palliative care teams

Often referred to as 'Macmillan Nurses', these nurses can be based in surrounding hospitals or in the local hospices, depending on where you live.

These teams offer similar support to the Macmillan breast care nurses or the hospital palliative care team but are able to visit you at home. Some of the home care teams link into day centres. Patients attending day centres can take part in activities, receive a range of complementary therapies and possibly receive medical advice regarding symptoms.

The numbers for the home care teams are listed at the back of this booklet.

## Where will my care and treatment take place?

Outpatient clinics for new patients and follow-up patients are held in The Rose Centre, Perimeter Road.

### Surgery

**Pre-admission clinic** – you will be given an appointment for a pre-operative assessment before your surgery. This is a check to make sure that you are fully prepared for your surgery and recovery period. You will be assessed for your

general fitness to have the surgery and anaesthetic, and you may have some tests. It is another opportunity to be given information and ask questions, as you will also meet the Macmillan breast care nurse.

**Surgical Admissions Lounge** – when you come into hospital for your surgery, you will go first to the surgical admissions lounge. (Your letter will tell you where this is.) You may go straight to theatre from here or go to the ward first. The nursing staff will keep you and your family informed about your allocated ward. You are most likely to go to **Gray Ward** which is located on the 4th floor, St James' Wing (020 8725 3194) or **Keate Ward**, which is located on the 5th floor St James Wing (020 8725 3227). Visiting is normally from 15:00 until 20:00 hours.

After your surgery, you will be given a clinic appointment to receive your results.

## Radiotherapy

Radiotherapy can be given in the Chelsea or Sutton branch of The Royal Marsden Hospital, whichever is nearer for you. The treatment plans can vary but involves usually attending daily as an outpatient from Monday to Friday for three to five weeks.

There are several booklets available about radiotherapy, ask your breast care nurses for details.

## Chemotherapy

Patients having chemotherapy will attend **Trevor Howell Day Unit** (020 8725 0519) for their treatment. You can find the day unit on the third floor of Lanesborough Wing.

Chemotherapy is given by specially trained nurses and they will answer any questions you have about it. They will also offer you further written information about your treatment