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Further information may be obtained from:-

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January 2006

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Breast Prosthesis

**Specialist Breast Care Service
Ulster Hospital**

Breast Prosthesis

What is a Breast Prosthesis?

A breast prosthesis is an artificial breast shape that is fitted into your bra to replace your natural breast following a mastectomy (removal of the breast by surgery). A partial or shell prosthesis may be inserted when part of the breast is removed and there is an imbalance or unevenness between your breasts.

Temporary or Soft Prosthesis

A Breast Care Nurse or Ward Nurse will fit you with a temporary or soft prosthesis prior to your discharge home. This lightweight prosthesis initially may feel a little uncomfortable to wear. As the prosthesis is quite light, it has a tendency to move around in the bra. To help secure it in place you could sew it into place or use some velcro. The prosthesis may be hand washed.

If you are receiving radiotherapy it is advisable to wear the soft prosthesis until completion of treatment. If you require a second or replacement soft prosthesis please contact the Breast Care Nurse.

If you are not receiving radiotherapy a permanent or silicone prosthesis can be obtained from the Breast Care Nurse about 6-8 weeks following treatment.

Silicone Prosthesis

You may contact your Breast Care Nurse on (028) 9055 0499 and arrange an appointment for your fitting. At this appointment you will also have the opportunity to see and try various styles and weights of prosthesis.

For the appointment, it is important to wear or bring a good fitting bra. If you find it difficult to find a good fitting bra, your Breast Care Nurse can advise you and provide you with lingerie brochures where appropriate. It is not necessary to have a pocketed bra or mastectomy bra for your fitting. To assist with the fitting we would recommend you wear a plain coloured, non-patterned blouse or T-shirt. This makes it easier to choose a prosthesis that gives a smooth outline.

Looking after your Prosthesis

The silicone prosthesis can be washed with warm soapy water and patted dry with a towel. Always keep your prosthesis in its box when you are not wearing it so that it does not get

damaged or lose its shape. Care must be taken not to puncture or tear the prosthesis with sharp items such as rings or brooches. If your prosthesis ruptures, sellotape or sticking plaster may be used on the split area until you receive a replacement prosthesis from the Breast Care Nurse.

Replacement of Prosthesis

The prosthesis is guaranteed for 2-3 years. However, they can remain in perfect condition for much longer. If your prosthesis fails to fit well because of changes in your weight, if it tears or becomes damaged, it can be replaced again by contacting the Breast Care Nurse. Some patients are interested to know how much a prosthesis costs. Currently prices range from £70-£134. **However, on the NHS all prostheses are free of charge when arranged by the Breast Care Nurses.**

Swimwear

Both the soft and silicone prosthesis can be worn inside swimwear. The Breast Care Nurse can advise you on suitable swimwear.