



Royal Berkshire  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Specialist nursing support for people with secondary breast cancer

Information for patients,  
relatives and carers

My Oncologist: \_\_\_\_\_  
My Clinical Nurse Specialist: \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_

## **What is secondary breast cancer?**

Secondary breast cancer occurs when breast cancer cells spread from the primary (first) cancer in the breast to other parts of the body.

Breast cancer cells can spread to another part of the body through the lymphatic system or the bloodstream. Some people may be diagnosed with primary and secondary breast cancer at the same time. You may also hear secondary breast cancer referred to as:

- metastatic breast cancer / metastases
- advanced breast cancer
- secondary tumours / secondaries
- stage 4 breast cancer

Secondary breast cancer can be treated, but it can't be cured.

Treatment aims to control the cancer, relieve any symptoms, and maintain your health, wellbeing and a good quality of life for as long as possible.

## **Finding information and support**

Coping with a diagnosis of secondary breast cancer can be overwhelming, but support is available.

In the days or weeks after your diagnosis, you may find it hard to think clearly. You may experience many different emotions.

However difficult it may seem, you can have some control over how you manage the illness and deal with the emotional and practical issues it brings.

**Breast Cancer Now's Secondary Breast Cancer Information Pack** contains information on treating the disease and coping with its impact, as well as signposting to sources of support. You can download it from <https://breastcancer.org/> or ask us for a copy.

## **How can we help you?**

It's our role as your specialist nurses to use our knowledge to provide information and support to help you, and those close to you, to understand your diagnosis and treatment. We work closely with other

healthcare professionals such as your GP and can arrange referrals to specialist healthcare and support services, including financial advice and/or benefits claims.

## Keeping in contact

- You can contact us when you need to.
- You can telephone us on **0118 322 7420** and leave a voicemail if necessary.
- Or email us at **[breastcarenurses@royalberkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:breastcarenurses@royalberkshire.nhs.uk)**

We are often busy but we'll respond to your message as soon as we can, although this may not be the same working day.

Please note we are not an emergency service. If in need of urgent advice please call your GP, or if out of hours NHS111, the telephone number in your chemotherapy diary or attend A&E, whichever is appropriate.

## Tell us your concerns

You may have many different needs and concerns. Identifying them is important as it means we can help you get the appropriate support. A holistic needs assessment (HNA) checklist helps you to think about your needs and concerns across all areas of your life and find possible solutions. We will offer an assessment around 8 weeks after your diagnosis but if you would like one sooner then please let us know.

## Meeting others

It can be hard to find anyone who understands what it's like to be diagnosed with Secondary Breast Cancer. Breast Cancer Care's Living with Secondary Breast Cancer sessions provide the chance to meet others who understand what you're going through because they're going through it too. Your nearest sessions are in Reading, Swindon or Oxford.

For more information call us or you can contact Breast Cancer Now directly on 0808 800 6000 or email [info@breastcancernow.org](mailto:info@breastcancernow.org)



## Other support

Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Office in the Berkshire

Cancer Centre at the Royal Berkshire Hospital 0118 322 8700

Email: [macmillan.information@royalberkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:macmillan.information@royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

Macmillan provides a number of resources which are readily available to you such as:

- Welfare benefits
- Understanding your specific cancer
- Cancer treatments and their side effects
- Support groups and services

If you need further information, Macmillan can assist you. Telephone: 0808 808 000 [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

## Useful contact numbers

CT Scanning 0118 322 7991

PET Scanning 0333 200 1731

King Edward Ward (Chemotherapy Unit RBH) 0118 322 7464

Bracknell Chemotherapy Unit 01344 662907

The Rosemary Centre (Chemotherapy Unit, Newbury) 01635 273659

Berkshire Cancer Centre Clinic 0118 322 7890

Cardiology (echo) 0118 322 6573

Lloyds Pharmacy 0118 322 7798 / 8984

Radiotherapy 0118 322 6979 / 7872

Hair Advisory Clinic 0118 322 7822

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**