



at St Vincent's Private Hospital East Melbourne

Side Effects of Breast Surgery

Everyone responds differently to the side effects that are experienced after breast surgery and these may vary in severity. According to Cancer Australia, the side effects may happen straight after surgery or develop over time.

Some of these may include:

- Fluid may collect in or around the scar in the breast or chest wall area or underarm - this is called a **SEROMA** and may need to be drained using a fine needle and a syringe; this can be done by a breast care nurse or your breast surgeon.
- **CORDING**, a condition that can feel like a tight cord running from the underarm down the inner arm- this improves with time and/or physio
- **NUMBNESS** or **TINGLING** in the arm if lymph nodes have been removed - this may improve with time, but feeling in these areas may change permanently
- **PAIN**, discomfort or numbness in the breast area and/or underarm while the wounds are healing - this usually settles after a few weeks
- **STIFFNESS** in the arm or shoulder - it may be helpful to do some approved exercises after surgery
- Mild pain in the arm and/or underarm - this can last a year or more after surgery if lymph nodes have been removed.
- If lymph nodes have been removed, there may be swelling in the arm, breast area, hand or chest that lasts after the initial side effects of surgery are over; this is called lymphoedema and can develop a few months or years after treatment.

Source: Cancer Australia