



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 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 and wellbeing so that you can have 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 you to sources of support. You will be offered a copy by your specialist nurse, or alternatively you can download it from their website: <https://breastcancernow.org/>

How can we help you?

As specialist nurses, we can 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 refer you to specialist healthcare and support services, including financial advice and/or benefits claims.

Keeping in contact

- You can contact us for advice, support and information.
- You can telephone us on **0118 322 7420** and leave a voicemail if necessary, as we are often in clinics or visiting wards.
- Or email us at **breastcarenurses@royalberkshire.nhs.uk**

We will endeavour to get back to you as soon as we can, although this may not be the same working day.

Please note we are not an emergency service. If you are in need of urgent advice, please call your GP, or if out of hours NHS111. The telephone number in your treatment diary is for any treatment-related side effects/emergencies and is a 24 hour number; you will be advised if you need to attend A&E.

Tell us your concerns

Identifying your different needs and concerns 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 3-6 weeks following your first oncology appointment, but if you would like one sooner please let us know. We also offer a nurse-led symptom management clinic alongside the Enhanced Supportive Care team (ESC). This is where you can discuss any symptoms you are experiencing from your cancer or treatment, talk about the future and any uncertainty or worries you may have. The ESC team can offer further support and advice.

Meeting others

It can be hard to find anyone who understands what it's like to be diagnosed with Secondary Breast Cancer. Breast Cancer Now, has Living with Secondary Breast Cancer Groups that provide the chance to meet others who understand what you're going through because they're going through it too. Your nearest session is in Reading at Green Park. There are also groups in Swindon and Oxford.

For more information about the groups, call us or Breast Cancer Now directly on 0808 800 6000 or email info@breastcancernow.org

Other support

Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Office in the Berkshire Cancer Centre, 0118 322 8700

email: macmillan.information@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Macmillan have a number of readily available resources 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 help you. Telephone: 0808 808 000 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

Rowlands 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

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

RBFT Breast Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialists. Reviewed: September 2025.
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