

DCIS Post-Mastectomy Patient Letter

[Date]

Dear [ARIA: Insert name];

Your surgeon and/or family doctor has referred you to the cancer clinic for consultation following mastectomy (surgical removal of the entire breast) for ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS) – Stage 0.

DCIS is a noninvasive (pre-malignant or pre-cancerous) diagnosis in which abnormal cells are found in the lining of a breast duct. The abnormal cells have not spread outside the duct to other areas in the breast. DCIS, if left untreated, has the potential to become invasive.

You have undergone mastectomy, therefore all of the DCIS has been surgically removed. As such, there is a very low risk of DCIS or invasive breast cancer recurrence (returning) at the mastectomy site. Unlike patients who have undergone breast conserving surgery (partial mastectomy or segmental resection) for DCIS, currently, there is no evidence that any further therapy (radiation therapy, chemotherapy or estrogen-blocking therapy e.g. tamoxifen) will further lower your risk of recurrence. **We have therefore sent a letter back to your doctor indicating that you do NOT require consultation at the Cancer Centre at this time.** The recommended follow-up procedures contained in this letter have also been sent to them for review.

SURVEILLANCE FOR CANCER RECURRENCE

We recommend follow-up as outlined below:

- **Have a mammogram** of your breast(s) every year. If you've had a complete mastectomy or complete mastectomy with reconstruction, mammograms are not needed on that side. Supplemental breast ultrasound can be added to mammography in the setting of extremely dense breast tissue (American College of Radiology category D) and/or at the discretion of the reading radiologist.
- **An exam** of your breast(s) and/or chest wall (mastectomy site) and armpits every 6 months for 2 years, and then once a year after that.
- There is no evidence to support the use of breast self-examination (BSE) as a cancer screening method. To learn more about recognizable signs and symptoms of breast cancer, visit the [Screening for Life](#) website.
- Other routine follow-up investigations (e.g. lab work, tumour markers, x-rays) are NOT recommended if you are not having any worrisome symptoms.

Remember, it is your responsibility to book your follow-up visits with your primary care provider (i.e. gynecologist) so they can arrange the tests you need.

Continue to See Your Primary Health Care Provider

Continue to see your primary health care provider (such as your family doctor or nurse practitioner) for your regular health exams. We will send them a summary of your cancer treatment and follow-up recommendations so they are aware of what to do for follow-up.

If you need a family doctor, you can find one by calling Health Link Alberta (811) or going to: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page13253.aspx>. Once you have a doctor, let them know they can view the health care provider follow-up recommendations at www.ahs.ca/guru.

If you do not currently have a family doctor, please call Health Link Alberta (1-866-408-5465) for a list of doctors in your area. If you have access to the Internet, you can also search for a family doctor accepting new patients on this website: <https://search.cpsa.ca/>

Support and General Recommendations

As you move forward, you may have questions about what is next, what you should do to take care of yourself, or how to improve your well-being. We hope that along with your care team, the [After Treatment](#) book will help you during this time of change, answer your questions, and give you the information and supports you need.

Recommended Resources:

- [After Treatment: Information and Resources to Help You Set Priorities and Take Action](#) (book)
— the oncology care team will give you this book at the end of your treatment

Counselling and Support:

Many patients find counselling services or support groups helpful when adjusting to life after cancer. They can help with things such as communication, stress management, coping with treatment side effects, mood changes, quality of life, body image, sexual health, or loneliness. If you would like to set up a counselling appointment, please pick the closest location from the list below and call to make an appointment:

Calgary: 403-355-3207	Lethbridge: 403-388-6814	Other Communities visit www.ahs.ca/cpn and click: Provincial Cancer Patient Navigation
Edmonton: 780-643-4303	Medicine Hat: 403-529-8817	
Grande Prairie: 825-412-4200	Red Deer: 403-343-4485	

Healthy Lifestyle Recommendations

You will find recommendations and information on ways to improve your well-being in the [After Treatment](#) book.

Ongoing Care

If there are any concerns about your cancer returning, your family doctor will connect you back to us.

Sincerely,

The Alberta Provincial Breast Tumour Team