

Care Plan for a Fictional Patient with Breast Cancer

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Module: Introduction to Physiology

Programme: BSc Health and Social Care

Module Code: BMHP5023

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Breast Cancer

- One of the most common cancers in the UK (NHS England, 2024).
- Develops when abnormal breast cells grow uncontrollably, forming a tumour (Cancer Research UK, 2024).
- This presentation explains:
 - Breast anatomy and physiology
 - Effects of breast cancer on the body
 - A fictional patient's care plan
 - Evidence-based care following NHS and NICE guidance (NICE, 2023).





Fictional Patient

Patient Profile

- **Name:** Sarah Williams (*fictional patient*)
- **Age:** 54 years
- **Gender:** Female
- **Occupation:** Office Administrator
- **Marital Status:** Married
- **Diagnosis:** Stage II Invasive Ductal Breast Cancer

Medical History

- Hypertension
- BMI: 31 kg/m² (Obese)

Lifestyle & Risk Factors

- Former smoker
- Regular alcohol consumption
- Limited physical activity
- Family history of breast cancer (mother)

Presenting Symptoms

- Painless lump in the left breast
- Referred to the breast clinic
- Diagnosis confirmed by mammogram and biopsy (NICE, 2023; NHS England, 2024)

Anatomy and Physiology of the Breast

Normal Breast Structure

- **Lobules** – produce milk.
- **Milk ducts** – carry milk to the nipple.
- **Fatty and connective tissue** – support the breast.
- **Lymph nodes** – help fight infection and filter lymph fluid.

Normal Physiology

- Healthy breast cells grow, divide and die in a controlled way.
- Cell growth is regulated by DNA and hormones, particularly **oestrogen** and **progesterone**.
- This process maintains normal breast tissue (Tortora and Derrickson, 2021).



How Breast Cancer Affects the Breast Disease Process

- DNA mutations cause abnormal breast cells to grow uncontrollably.
- Cancer cells form a malignant tumour.
- The tumour invades surrounding breast tissue.
- Cancer may spread to nearby lymph nodes and other organs (metastasis).
- Normal breast function and healthy tissue become disrupted (NHS England, 2024).

Possible Symptoms

- Breast lump
- Change in breast shape or size
- Skin dimpling or nipple changes
- Breast or armpit pain (may occur in some patients)

Care Plan: Treatment and Monitoring

Treatment Plan

- Lumpectomy (breast-conserving surgery)
- Chemotherapy
- Radiotherapy
- Hormone therapy (if hormone receptor-positive) (NICE, 2023)

Monitoring

- Regular follow-up appointments
- Monitor treatment side effects
- Wound assessment after surgery
- Blood tests and imaging as required
- Check for signs of recurrence (NHS England, 2024)

Goal of Care

- Remove or control the cancer
- Prevent recurrence
- Maintain quality of life

Care Routine and Nursing Care

Daily Care

- Pain assessment and management
- Wound care following surgery
- Monitor for infection and lymphoedema
- Encourage a balanced diet and adequate hydration
- Promote gentle physical activity as tolerated
- Provide emotional and psychological support
- Encourage medication adherence and follow-up appointments

Goal: Promote recovery, prevent complications and improve quality of life.

Communication and Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)

Person-Centered Communication

- Active listening and empathy
- Clear, honest and respectful communication
- Shared decision-making
- Emotional support for the patient and family

Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)

- Breast surgeon
- Oncologist
- Breast care nurse
- GP
- Radiographer
- Physiotherapist
- Dietitian
- Psychologist/Counsellor

Goal: Deliver coordinated, holistic and person-centered care.

Ethical Considerations

Key Ethical Principles

- **Autonomy** – respect Sarah's right to make informed decisions.
- **Beneficence** – provide care that promotes her wellbeing.
- **Non-maleficence** – avoid unnecessary harm.
- **Justice** – ensure fair and equal access to care.
- **Confidentiality** – protect personal and medical information.

Person-Centred Care

- Obtain informed consent.
- Respect dignity, values and preferences.
- Involve Sarah in all care decisions.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Recommendations

- Encourage regular breast screening and breast awareness.
- Promote a healthy diet, regular exercise and weight management.
- Limit alcohol consumption and avoid smoking.
- Attend all follow-up appointments and screenings.
- Provide ongoing psychological and emotional support.
- Deliver person-centred care following NHS and NICE guidelines.

Conclusion

- Early diagnosis and evidence-based care improve outcomes.
- A holistic, multidisciplinary approach supports recovery and quality of life.

References

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