



A lifetime of specialist care

PRESS RELEASE

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Nurses design new bra to help women recover from cardiac surgery

A special bra has been designed by clinical experts at Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust to help improve wound healing in women recovering from cardiac surgery.

The team led by Melissa Rochon, clinical nurse specialist in surveillance, worked with medical manufacturer CUI to create a bra that is made in a wider range of sizes as a solution for patients who have trouble with their wounds healing and required more comfort after their surgery

During the trial period at the Trust the proportion of females suffering surgical site infections (SSIs) was reduced significantly.

Research shows that women are more likely to have SSIs after cardiac surgery than men because if their chest area is not properly supported, pressure can be put on the chest incision causing the wound to gape. Poor-fitting bras can also lead to pressure sores and wound breakdown that can cause infections.

Melissa said, "We know that a well-fitting bra will promote good wound healing and reduce the risk of damage to the new incision and under band area for the weeks following surgery.

"Existing post-surgery bras with removal straps were only available up to a D cup. Fluid weight gain is typically associated with heart surgery and around 50 per cent of women need this size or bigger after their operation. Unfortunately this means that women often go without a bra after surgery or wear an unsuitable or badly fitting one, leading to discomfort and increased risk of pressure ulcers."

The resulting BHIS™ postoperative bra has a unique combination of features, including patent-pending side support to reduce medial-lateral tension on the wound and adjustable fastenings to allow room for different sized wound dressings and fluid gain after surgery.

"We are now using the new bras at Royal Brompton and Harefield hospitals and teams from other hospitals are already keen to offer them to their own patients," says Melissa. "CUI also offers full training to theatre and ward staff to ensure they know which size bra to use and how to fit them for the best outcomes for patients."

Royal Brompton and Harefield patient, Heather Lynch, adds, "The bra proved to be a great help upon my return home. It is both comfortable and supportive and alleviated any concern I had about my chest wound."

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For further information, please contact:

Holly Gilligan
Media relations officer
Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust
Tel: 020 7352 8121 ext 2237
Mobile: 07891 310 924
Email: h.gilligan@rbht.nhs.uk
Follow us on Twitter: @RBandH

Notes to editors:

1. Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust is the UK's largest specialist centre for the treatment of heart and lung disease. Working from two sites, Royal Brompton Hospital in Chelsea, West London, and Harefield Hospital, near Uxbridge, the Trust has an international reputation for the expertise of its staff, high standard of care and research success. Experts at the Trust help patients from all age groups who have heart and lung problems and provide some of the most complex surgery and sophisticated treatments available anywhere in the world.

The Trust is the UK's largest centre for the treatment of adult congenital heart disease and is the country's leading provider of specialist respiratory care. Over the years the Trust has been responsible for major medical breakthroughs, such as the UK's first combined heart and lung transplant. It established the UK's first adult service for cystic fibrosis, which is now one of Europe's biggest treatment centres for the condition, and has pioneered the use of primary angioplasty for the treatment of heart attacks. Today the Heart Attack Centre at Harefield has one of the fastest arrival-to-treatment times in the UK, a crucial factor in patients' survival.

As a member of the Academic Health Science Centre (AHSC), in collaboration with Imperial College London, Imperial College Healthcare Trust and The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, the Trust helps to drive innovation and improved care for over 1.1 million patients each year in North West London, by aligning the research, education and clinical services of the partner organisations. For more information, visit: www.rbht.nhs.uk

2. The BHIS bra can be ordered by hospitals directly by phone: 0116 262 4333 or email: ctbra@cuiwear.com
Patients can purchase by calling: 0800 279 2050 or through the BHIS website: www.bhisbra.co.uk