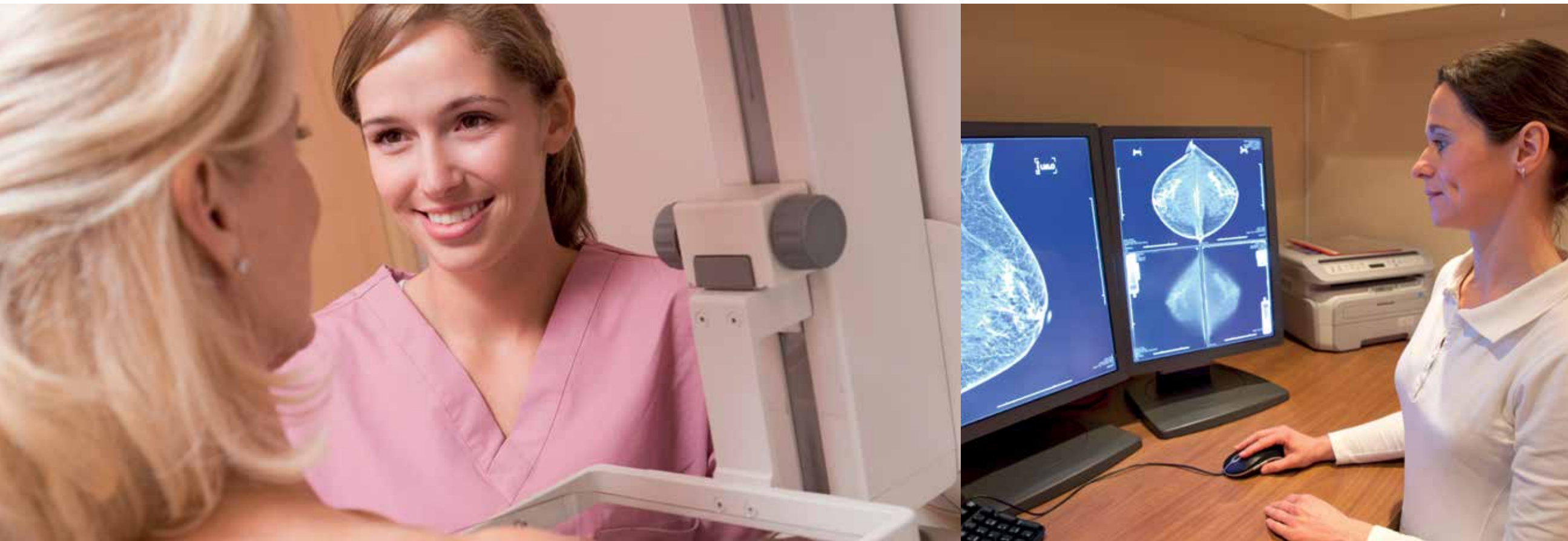


Ingenious plumbing leads to better drainage



BMI Priory Hospital's transfer surgery counters lymphoedema.

Like many systems inside our bodies, the lymphatic system is one that we don't give any thought to until it goes wrong.

One of its functions is to drain excess fluid from tissues. However, if the system is disrupted or damaged, it can lose this ability and the fluid will cause the tissue to swell. This is known as lymphoedema, and it can be triggered when the lymph nodes are surgically removed or irradiated as part of cancer treatment. The result can be a swelling of the upper or lower limbs, most frequently following gynaecological or breast

cancer procedures. This is a debilitating condition which causes misery for most sufferers and requires them to wear daily compression garments. Unfortunately it tends to get progressively worse with time and serves as a daily reminder of their cancer treatment.

Until recently, there weren't any surgical techniques that showed a consistent improvement in lymphatic drainage. However, at BMI Priory Hospital they are now carrying out a relatively new and exciting procedure to manage lymphoedema. It is called lymph node transfer surgery and it has been shown to improve or even cure arm or leg lymphoedema.

Performed by Consultant Plastic Surgeon Miss Anne Dancey, it is now possible to transfer spare lymph nodes with their blood supply from the groin area. If the lymph nodes are used in isolation, they are harvested with a supplying artery and vein which is plumbed into vessels in the vicinity of where they are being transplanted.

There are minimal side effects from harvesting the nodes and most importantly there is no risk of lower limb lymphoedema. This really is a breakthrough in the treatment of this awful condition and we feel privileged to be able to offer patients a solution.

Miss Dancey completed a six month fellowship at the world-renowned breast reconstruction unit in Gent, Belgium.

She frequently works alongside fellow Consultant Plastic Surgeon Miss Ruth Waters who has a specialist interest in aesthetic and reconstructive surgery of the breast, as well as skin oncology and skin lasers.

Miss Dancey comments: "Sometimes women needing breast reconstruction or suffering from lymphoedema actually prefer to meet and be treated by women consultants. Ruth and I share a lot of the same ideas about treatments and we work very well together as a team."

Hillary Pengelly has suffered with lymphoedema in her left arm since a breast cancer operation twenty years ago.

But just days after a lymph node transfer, carried out by Anne Dancey, the swelling in her arm had already

reduced dramatically and she is happy to be saying goodbye to her arm bandage and hello to a clothes shopping spree!

The former civil service staff trainer and management consultant is now planning to raise money so other sufferers can have the same sort of treatment.

"I can't describe how happy I am to have had the operation and be seeing such positive results within a few days. For 20 years my arm has been so swollen I have had to have my clothes specially designed."

"Now my lovely husband has said he's taking me on a shopping spree so I can have what I want 'off the peg' so to speak. It's a great feeling and I'm really looking forward to it."

Consultant Profiles



Name: Miss Anne Dancey
MBChB(Hons),
MRCS, FRCS(Plast),
MmedSci(Hons)
Consultant Plastic Surgeon
Specialties: Cosmetic surgery, Breast surgery
Hospitals: BMI The Priory Hospital & BMI The Edgbaston Hospital



Name: Miss Ruth Waters
FRCS (Plast).
Consultant Plastic Surgeon
Specialties: Aesthetic and reconstructive surgery of the breast
Hospital: BMI The Priory Hospital



Hillary up and about just days after her operation

If you are affected by lymphoedema and would like to discuss possible options for improvement please contact us.

For further information please call **0800 404 6786**