



PATIENT LEAFLET - PAGET'S DISEASE

WHAT IS PAGET'S DISEASE?

Paget's disease is a rare type of breast cancer that occurs in the ducts adjacent to the nipple and areola and spreads to the skin of the nipple and the areola. Accounting for only one percent of breast cancers, it is a rare presentation. About half of people presenting with Paget's disease of the nipple will have a separate associated area of DCIS or an underlying breast cancer elsewhere in the breast.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF PAGET'S DISEASE?

- Redness and irritation of the nipple and/or areola
- Crusting and scaling of the nipple area
- Bleeding from the nipple/areola
- Oozing from the nipple/areola
- Burning and/or itching of the nipple/areola

HOW IS PAGET'S DISEASE DIAGNOSED?

As with all breast problems, triple assessment (using a clinical examination, mammogram, ultrasound and a biopsy of any abnormal looking tissue) is the key to making an accurate diagnosis. There is often a delay in diagnosing Paget's disease if women are wrongly treated for eczema of the nipple, so if you are concerned please seek advice from an expert like Miss Bright-Thomas who is used to dealing with problems like this. The results of a nipple biopsy should be available within a few days after the case has been discussed in a full multi-disciplinary meeting (where Miss Bright-Thomas, the X-ray doctor and the laboratory specialist (pathologist) are all present.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR PAGET'S DISEASE?

If the breast cancer is limited to Paget's disease, treatment includes the surgical removal of the nipple and areola, as well as a margin of healthy tissue around the areola. The nipple can often be reconstructed at the same time or later on. If there is any associated underlying breast cancer that will be treated as outlined above in the section on breast cancer.

WHAT IS THE PROGNOSIS FOR PAGET'S DISEASE?

If the breast cancer is limited to Paget's disease, The prognosis is generally very good. If there is an associated second area of cancer within the breast the outlook will depend upon the details of this condition.