

Instructions for Before and After Breast Reconstruction Surgery

What to expect: Soreness, bruising and swelling for several weeks. There will be discomfort/pain with this surgery. **Our goal is manageable pain during your recovery.** You may notice drainage from the incisions or around the drain insertion sites for a few days to a week postoperative.

***IMPORTANT*:** If you are currently taking any type of birth control, the antibiotics given during and after surgery may interfere with the effects of birth control. You should use a second method for one month post-surgery.

SIX WEEKS BEFORE SURGERY: Your surgeon may request you abstain from smoking and all tobacco/nicotine products for 6 weeks before and 6 weeks after surgery. Failure to abstain from tobacco/nicotine may result in your surgery being postponed or canceled as this complicates the healing process.

TWO WEEKS BEFORE SURGERY: Discontinue Aspirin and Aspirin-like products, ibuprofen (Motrin/Advil), Naprosyn (Aleve), Vitamin E, Omega-3, Omega-6, Flaxseed Oil, weight loss supplements (both over the counter and prescription) and certain herbs like Ginko Biloba, St. John's Wort, and Ephedra. Have other vitamins or herbs cleared with our office. You may take Tylenol (acetaminophen), as directed, at any time prior to surgery.

*****MAOI medications** – You **MUST** be off any MAOIs for a total of 10 days prior to surgery. Contact your prescriber to be instructed on tapering off the medication prior to surgery.

DAY OF SURGERY: Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the evening before surgery, unless otherwise directed by the anesthesiologist.

AFTER SURGERY CARE:

- Unfortunately, there will be discomfort or even pain after surgery. You will experience some muscle soreness and spasm. Sometimes, your upper back and shoulders will also be sore from trying to compensate. Simple tasks, such as brushing your teeth or hair, may help with your range of motion. Limited range of motion is to be expected for a limited time.
- Take all medications prescribed by your surgeon as directed. It is helpful to take prescription pain medication with bland food to avoid nausea, which may occur if taken on an empty stomach. It is also important to take pain medicine as prescribed to help minimize pain.
- You **will not** wear a bra after surgery. You may have a post-operative camisole that has pockets for drains. This is strictly for comfort in carrying your drains. Other options for holding drains will be offered, as well.
- **Contact the office before applying ANYTHING to your incisions.**
Your surgeon does not want any ointments, lotions or oils on your incisions until after we begin expanding 4-6 weeks postoperative. We will discuss with you, in the office, when it will be appropriate to begin using lotions, etc. on the incisions.
- Contact the office before taking any Aspirin, ibuprofen (Motrin/Advil) or Aspirin-like medications. You may take Tylenol, if you are not taking a pain medicine that already contains Tylenol (acetaminophen), such as Percocet (oxycodone) or Norco (hydrocodone).
- While taking prescription pain medicine, drink plenty of non-caffeinated beverages and eat fruit and food high in fiber to avoid constipation. Should constipation occur, discontinue pain medication (if tolerated). For relief, you may try magnesium citrate (purchased at your local pharmacy) or prune juice. It may take up to 24 hours to produce a bowel movement. These treatments may be repeated as needed.
- Be sure to take several deep breaths and make yourself cough several times per hour to prevent atelectasis, which can cause a low grade fever if it develops, but subsides with coughing and deep breath exercises.

AFTER SURGERY ACTIVITY AND HYGIENE INSTRUCTIONS:

- No lifting over 10-15lb. until cleared by your surgeon.
- When at home, take frequent rest periods – you may walk for short distances, as walking is important to prevent clots from forming in your legs. As you increase your activity, let comfort be your guide. If it hurts, don't do it.
- Do not resume jogging, aerobics, sexual or vigorous activity until cleared by your surgeon.
- No heavy household chores (laundry, vacuuming, sweeping/mopping, etc.) until cleared by your surgeon.
- All dressings may be removed at 24-48 hours, at which time you may shower. Do not submerge incisions or drains (if present) under water such as in bath, lake, river, pool or hot tub. Start in the shower by facing away from the showerhead. If you can face the showerhead without discomfort, feel free to do so. Again, use pain as your guide.
- While taking pain medicine, have someone assist you with daily activities, particularly personal hygiene.
- Limit arm usage to routine daily functions such as brushing your teeth, eating, washing and combing your hair. Avoid lifting the elbow above the shoulder for the first week postoperative.
- Avoid vigorous arm motion that requires pushing, pulling and/or lifting heavy objects.
- As you heal and soreness subsides, let pain be your guide for your activity level. If it hurts, don't do it. Continue with no heavy lifting until cleared by your surgeon.
- Check with your surgeon before returning to work, particularly if your job requires heavy lifting or vigorous activity.
- You may drive if you have not taken prescription pain medicine in 24 hours or more. If you have pain with range of motion, you may choose to have a driver until you have good range of motion without pain.
- Avoid sleeping on your abdomen until all soreness has subsided. You may find sleeping propped on 2-3 pillows more comfortable.
- Do not smoke for 6 weeks as smoking delays the healing process.

WOUND CARE:

- You may have several layers of dressings. After 24-48 hours, you may remove all dressings.
- **DO NOT PUT ANYTHING ON YOUR INCISIONS EXCEPT SOAP AND WATER UNLESS INSTRUCTED BY YOUR SURGEON!**

NOTIFY YOUR SURGEON IF:

- **You are inpatient and having difficulty getting pain medication in a timely manner, call the number below.**
- You have a fever greater than 101 that lasts more than 24 hours.
- You develop excessive swelling, redness or warmth of incisions.
- You experience severe pain not responding to pain medication.
- You develop thick, odorous drainage from incisions or drain sites or bleeding that does not subside.
- You experience shortness of breath.
- You have any concerns or questions.

If you have concerns after hours, contact our office at 417-875-3246 and an operator will page the on-call surgeon for you.