

PLASTIC SURGICAL ARTS

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INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING BREAST RECONSTRUCTION

PAIN CONTROL:

- Take your pain medication every 4-6 hours as needed the first few days until your pain lessens.
- Always take your medication with food in your stomach.
- Do not drink alcohol while taking prescribed pain medications.
- Do not drive or operate equipment while on your pain medication or until you can stomp on the brakes and crank the steering wheel without pain.
- Do not take additional over-the-counter pain medications (aspirin, ibuprofen, Tylenol) unless directed by a physician. If you experience pain control issues while taking prescribed medications, please contact our office at 402-483-2572.

DRESSING/INCISION CARE:

- You may shower starting the day after surgery, but make sure someone is with you the first time. If the dressings stick to the incision, you may remove them while showering. Use soap in the shower and let the water run over the breast area. You do not need to face away from the shower. Following your shower, pat the breasts dry with a clean towel.
- Place clean dressing over the incision and wear a tube top/ "sleep bra" until no more drainage is noticed.
- When you become more active after the first few days to a week, you may want to wear a sports bra that is not too tight on the underside of the breast. Do not wear an underwire bra until instructed.
- Do not apply any lotions or creams to the incisions until OK'd by your doctor. It is OK to use moisturizing cream to the skin away from the incisions.
- Drain sites will generally produce more drainage than incisions, but will close on their own in the first 24 hours.
- It is normal for your breast to appear somewhat boxy (meaning a relatively flat bottom to your breast instead of a normal curved appearance. It is also normal for the incisions to have puckers. These will improve with time as your absorbable sutures disappear. Your breast will take on a more natural appearance after the first few weeks.

CONTACT YOUR PHYSICIAN (402.483.2572) IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OCCUR:

- Initially, your breasts will have some swelling.: One breast may be slightly more swollen than the other or may be more painful. If you experience significant pain or swelling in one breast than the other, please call our office and talk with the nurse or physician on call.
- If you are running a fever of greater than 101 degrees F or more, have redness or drainage from either breast, please call our office.
- If you notice one or both nipple areolar complex to have a deep bluish discoloration, please call our
- If you notice the incision gaping or opening in any area, please call the office.
- Please call with any concerns or questions you may have. We would rather hear about something unimportant than miss something that is.

ACTIVITY:

- You can lift your elbows to the level of your shoulders, but not above. It is OK to grab something from a shelf at eye level, but not above.
- On your first day at home, you may begin to exercise by walking short distances and increasing this activity each day. You can and should move your arms, but for the first three weeks: do not do any heavy lifting and minimize lifting above your head. It is ok to lift your arms to wash your hair in the shower.

- Three (3) weeks following your surgery begin massaging the breast scars, using the palm surface of your fingers in a circular motion. Apply a lotion that agrees with your skin and push the scar against your body while massaging. Your scars will soften and lighten in color over time. Protect the breast scars from tanning for 12 months.