

## **Post-Operative Instructions for Breast Reconstruction**

There may be information here that contradicts information on the general Post-Operative Instructions sheet. Any time this occurs, follow these procedure specific instructions. If you have any questions, please call the office at (413) 731-7877.

- Minimal activities for the first 4 days after surgery.
- Sleep on back for first 2 weeks.
- While drains are in you may sponge bath only.
- You may change the gauze dressings as needed. You can use ABD pads, maxi pads, or nursing pads.
- Leave the binder in place until your first post-operative visit. The dressings will be changed at your first visit.
- Do not raise arms above shoulders.
- NO heavy lifting (greater than 15 pounds), pushing or pulling for 4 weeks after surgery.
- NO driving or working while on pain medications.
- You may take Tylenol for pain or Benadryl for itching if needed.
- Avoid Advil, Motrin, or Ibuprofen for the first week after surgery but you may take them any time after the 1<sup>st</sup> week.

You can expect:

- Sutures to be removed between 10-14 days after surgery if they are not dissolvable.
- Drains will be in for 1-2 weeks after surgery.
- To return to non-strenuous work within 3-7 days.
- Moderate discomfort which should be relieved with pain medications.
- Moderate swelling of chest and abdomen.
- Bruising around chest.
- Some bloody or clear drainage on dressings for the first week after surgery. Wear pad to keep clothes clean.

Call the office if you experience:

- Severe pain not relieved by pain medications.
- Increased swelling or firmness.
- Excessive drainage on dressings that is increasing.
- Incisions that appear to be opening.
- Any red, hot, or pus containing areas.
- A fever greater than 101.5
- Call the office at any time with questions.

**As time goes by and you are healing**, the following apply:

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- Most swelling, bruising and soreness resolves within 6-8 weeks.
- Return to strenuous activities in about 8 weeks.
- The scar will continue to fade for up to 2 years.

Some supplies that may be helpful to purchase prior to surgery:

- 1 box of gauze pads, maxi pads, or nursing pads for dressing changes
- 1 bottle of antibacterial soap
- 1 roll of paper tape
- 1 tube of bacitracin ointment

\*\*We require 48 hours for prescription refills. Please call in advance.

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