



Post-Operative and Home Care Instructions for Placement of Tissue Expanders

DIET: Start with clear liquids and toast or crackers. If those are well tolerated, progress to a regular diet.

ACTIVITY: You may walk and climb stairs immediately following surgery. After 2 weeks you may resume moderate activity such as brisk walking. No sexual activity for 3 weeks. During the first 4 weeks, do not lift anything heavier than a gallon of milk (10 pounds). No heavy exercise for 4 weeks (tennis, yoga, Pilates, jogging, aerobics, weights, etc.). After 6 weeks you may resume more strenuous aerobic work and lifting activities, as discussed with your physician.

WORK: Depending on your career and your rate of healing, you should be able to return to work within 4 to 6 weeks of surgery. If your job involves heavy lifting, please allow 8 to 12 weeks before returning to work. Your surgeon will be able to give you a better estimate depending on your physical and professional profile. Flying or traveling is permitted after the first week as tolerated.

WOUND CARE: You will have 1 or 2 drains in each breast. A drain kit with instructions and teaching by the nursing staff will be provided at the hospital. Empty and record (in "cc" amounts) the drainage amount once or twice per day after discharge from the hospital and bring your drain record with you to each clinic appointment.

All of your sutures will be under the skin. You will either have a layer of skin glue that resembles clear nail polish or steri-strips, similar to tape, on all of your incisions. Please do not remove the steri-strips. Your surgeon will remove the dressings, if needed. You may feel and see the expander under the skin most pronounced at the midline.

BATHING: You may shower and wash your hair 48 hours after surgery. Shower only for the first 30 days post-operative. Try to keep the shower directed at your back and not at your incision or dressing. It is okay if the dressing gets wet in the shower. Pat it dry after your shower. For the first 4-6 weeks after surgery, do not submerge in a bathtub, pool, or hot tub. Support your drains in the shower around your neck or waist.

MEDICATIONS: Take pain medication as needed for up to 4 weeks in moderation and at night if needed. While you are taking pain medicine, you are encouraged to follow a high fiber diet or take a stool softener such as Colace (available over the counter), as pain medications tend to cause constipation. Do not take Motrin/Ibuprofen or Aspirin products for 1 week after surgery. Ask your surgeon when you may resume your blood thinning medications. All other prescription medications may be resumed the following day if tolerating fluids/solids, as discussed with your physician. Take your full course of antibiotics if prescribed by your surgeon.

SMOKING AND ALCOHOL: Do not smoke for the first several weeks after surgery as it impedes wound healing and can lead to serious wound complications. Smoking, Alcohol, and Cannabis consumption is dangerous while taking pain medicine. It has a tendency to worsen bleeding. If you use Cannabis/Marijuana, please discuss with your physician.

POST-OPERATIVE APPOINTMENT: Your first follow-up visit will be approximately 1 week after surgery. Your surgeon will then see you at appropriate intervals after this to monitor your progress.

PHYSICAL THERAPY: A prescription for physical therapy will be given to you at either your pre-operative appointment or your first post-op appointment. Gentle range of motion exercises are encouraged during the first 2 weeks.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS: Call your surgeon immediately if you experience any of the following: excessive pain, rapidly expanding swelling under the skin, bleeding, redness at the incision site or pus drainage from incision, spreading



bright pink discoloration, or fever over 101.5° F.

GARMENTS: Do not wear a compressive bra for the first 3 weeks. You may wear a light camisole for gentle support.

Call 911 if you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency. Such symptoms include severe shortage of breath, chest palpitations, sudden or severe chest pain, or other life-threatening concerns.