General Home Care after Breast Reconstruction Surgery

Your Follow-Up Visit

Call 614-293-0223 to schedule an appointment after your surgery. Your appointment will be at the Breast Reconstruction Surgery Office located at The Stefanie Spielman Comprehensive Breast Center, 1145 Olentangy River Road, Columbus, OH 43212.

Wound Care

- If you have a surgical dressing over your incision when you leave the hospital, you should remove the dressing 2 days after your surgery, unless you have been given other instructions.
- After the dressing is removed, clean the area with soap and water and pat dry.
- Wear your postoperative garment at all times, except while bathing. You will be told if the schedule for wearing this garment can be changed.
- You may have small amounts of blood-tinged drainage at the incision site for 2 to 3 days after your surgery. You may cover the site with a dry bandage. Do not put anything on your incision unless you have been told to do so by your doctor.

Showering or Bathing

- You may shower
- You may not shower, take a sponge bath only
- Other ____________________________

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

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Do not let your incision or drains go under water when taking a bath or using a hot tub. Do not swim until your doctor has said it is okay for you to do so.

Diet
Start with a light diet and advance to your regular diet as tolerated. The pain medicine you are taking may cause constipation. You may be told to take a stool softener. If you continue to have constipation, you may need a laxative. Please call the office to discuss your symptoms with the nurse.

Activity
- If you have drains in place after surgery, do not lift anything over _________ pounds.
- When your drains are removed, do not lift anything over _________ pounds for _________ weeks.
- If you did not have drains in place after surgery, do not lift anything over _________ pounds for _________ weeks.
- Do not raise your arm above the level of your shoulder.

General light activity and walking is encouraged. Do not “work out” or do strenuous activity, including housework, until you have talked with your doctor.

What to Expect after Surgery
- Have someone stay with you the first 24 hours after you are home.
- You may have swelling, tenderness, numbness and drainage at the incision site. These symptoms may last for several weeks after your surgery.

Medicines
- Take your medicines as prescribed by your doctor.
- Do not take any aspirin or blood thinners for 7 days after your surgery.
Surgery can cause pain that requires narcotic pain medicines like Percocet, Vicodin or Tylenol with Codeine. Your doctor will decide if you need a prescription for this medicine.

- **Our office does not refill prescriptions during the night or on weekends.** Call the office during regular business hours to let the nurse know your supply is running low and that you continue to have pain.

**Smoking**

- Smoking can seriously affect blood circulation and healing.
  - **Do not smoke for 4 weeks before surgery and for 4 weeks after your surgery.**
  - Use of a nicotine patch or gum is not recommended.

**When to Call Your Doctor**

Call the office at **(614) 293-0223** if you have:

- Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher
- Excessive pain
- Redness around the incision site
- Drainage that has increased or changed from the incision site

**If you call the office after hours, an answering service will take a message. The answering service will contact the doctor-on-call, who will then call you back to discuss your problem.**