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Postoperative Instructions

LATISSIMUS DORSI BREAST RECONSTRUCTION

A 1-3 day hospital stay is expected.

Have someone drive you home after surgery and help you at home for 1-2 days.

Get plenty of rest; follow balanced diet.

Decreased activity and pain medication may promote constipation, so you may want to add more fresh fruit to your diet, and be sure to increase fluid intake.

Take pain medication as prescribed. Do not take aspirin or any products containing aspirin unless approved by your surgeon.

Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medications.

Do not smoke, as smoking delays healing and increases the risk of complications.

Activities

Walk as soon as possible, as this helps reduce swelling and lowers the chance of blood clots.

Do not drive until you are no longer taking narcotic pain medications.

Do not drive until you have full range of motion with your arms.

No overhead lifting, strenuous sports or sexual activity for 4-6 weeks.

No swimming, hot tubs, or baths if you have a tissue expander in place with your latissimus dorsi flap.

Return to work in 2-3 weeks.

You may participate in post-mastectomy physical therapy 2-3 weeks after surgery.

Incision Care

You may shower 48 hours after removal of the drainage tubes.

Avoid exposing scars to sun for at least 12 months.

Always use a strong sunblock, if sun exposure is unavoidable (SPF 30 or greater).

Keep steri-strips in place.

Keep incisions clean, dry and inspect daily for signs of infection.

No tub soaking while sutures or drains are in place.

What to Expect

You are likely to feel tired and sore for 2-4 weeks.

Normal sensation to the breast cannot be restored; in time, some feeling may or may not return.

Appearance

Most scars will fade substantially over time, 1-2 years.

Reconstructed breast may feel firmer and look rounder or flatter than natural breast.

Reconstructed breast may not match natural breast.

Follow-Up Care

Sutures will be dissolvable and will be clipped to skin level on the first or second clinic appointment.

Drains are removed when the drainage is less than 30mL/day for 2 days.

When to Call

If you have increased swelling or bruising.

If swelling and redness persist after a few days.

If you have increased redness along the incision.

If you have severe or increased pain not relieved by medication.

If you have any side effects to medications; such as, rash, nausea, headache, vomiting.

If you have an oral temperature over 100.4 degrees.

If you have any yellowish or greenish drainage from the incisions or notice a foul odor.

If you have bleeding from the incisions that is difficult to control with light pressure.

If you have loss of feeling or motion.

For Medical Questions, Please Call:

(615) 921-2100 Monday-Thursday 9:00 AM-5:00 PM and Fridays 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM. After hours and on weekends, the answering service will contact Dr. Wendel or the plastic surgeon on call.