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# Postoperative Instructions

## **ONCOPLASTIC BREAST RECONSTRUCTION**

This is typically an outpatient surgery. If you have lymph node dissection, your general surgeon or surgical oncologist may choose to admit you to the hospital.

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 drink plenty of fluids.

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

Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medication.

If you are taking vitamins with iron, resume these as tolerated.

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.

Refrain from vigorous activity for 4-6 weeks. Increase activity gradually as tolerated.

Avoid lifting more than 10 pounds for 2 weeks.

Resume social and employment activities in approximately 2 weeks.

No swimming for 4-6 weeks.

Physical therapy is not typically necessary for this procedure.

### **Incision Care**

You may shower 72 hours after the day of surgery.

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.

Wear your surgical bra 24/7 until your first postoperative visit. *(Dr. Wendel may let you change to a sports bra after the first visit. The sports bra needs to have a front closure with formed cups (not flat front).*

Avoid bras with stays or underwire bras for 6 weeks.

You may cover the incisions with gauze for comfort.

If your breast skin is exceedingly dry after surgery, you can apply a moisturizer

twice a day, though be sure to keep the suture area and steri-strips dry.

### **What to Expect**

Drainage tubes are typically not necessary for oncoplastic breast reconstruction.

The incisions will be taped with steri-strips. Leave these in place until they fall off themselves or need to be changed. You can expect drainage onto the steri-strips.

Maximum discomfort will occur the first few days after surgery.

You may experience temporary soreness, bruising, swelling and tightness in the breasts, as well as discomfort along the incisions.

You may not have sensation in the nipples. This usually returns as your body recovers.

Your first menstruation following surgery may cause your breasts to swell and hurt.

You may have random, shooting pains for several months.

### **Appearance**

Most of the discoloration and swelling will subside in 2-4 weeks.

Your breasts will feel firm to the touch.

Scars will be reddened for 6 months. After that, they will gradually fade and soften.

### **Follow-Up Care**

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

On the occasion that drains are necessary, the 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.