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Postoperative Instructions

BREAST TISSUE EXPANDER SURGERY

DO NOT HAVE AN MRI WITH YOUR TISSUE EXPANDER IN PLACE

This surgery may be performed immediately at the time of mastectomy or delayed for a later time. If done immediately, a 1-day hospital stay for the mastectomy is expected. If done in a delayed fashion, this is an outpatient procedure.

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.

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, this helps reduce swelling and lowers the chance of blood clots.

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

Resuming your normal routine depends on the type and complexity of your surgery. Usually you can manage your normal routine while the expander is in place.

Return to work in 2-6 weeks depending on your occupation.

No hot tubs, swimming in lakes while the tissue expander is in place.

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

Incision Care

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.

What to Expect

You may have surgical drains.

Drains will be removed when the 24-hour output is less than 30mL/day for 2 days.

You may shower 48 hours after drains have been removed.

Expansion usually starts 2-3 weeks after your surgery.

Appearance

While the tissue is being expanded, a bulge will be created. Depending upon the location of the tissue expansion, the bulge may be considered desirable or unsightly.

Following tissue expansion, a more normal look should be restored.

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

Reconstructed breast may not match natural breast.

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.