

## **BREAST RECONSTRUCTION SURGERY AT THE HOSPITAL POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS**

### **(Mastectomy with Latissimus Muscle, Mastectomy with Tissue Expanders, Mastectomy with TRAM Flap)**

#### **General Discharge Instructions:**

1. The medication or sedation given to you will be acting in your body for the next 24 hours, because of this you may be sleepy, dizzy, and/or lightheaded. These feelings will wear off slowly. **Therefore you should not:** stay alone, drive a car, operate machinery, power tools, drink alcohol including beer, make important decisions or sign legal documents.
2. Eat a light diet following surgery. Avoid spicy, greasy, fried or gaseous foods. If you experience any nausea, fluids that are clear and high in sugar are recommended (Gatorade, soda, Kool-aid, nonacid juices).

#### **Medications:**

-You will receive prescriptions the morning of surgery and they will be sent to the pharmacy of your choice.

-Be sure to eat something substantial prior to taking your pain medication and antibiotic, as both can be nauseating and hard on your stomach.

-Initially, take your pain medication and antibiotic 2 hours apart. If you were to become nauseated or have a reaction, you would know which medication you may not be tolerating.

-Take pain medication and muscle relaxer 2-4 hours apart.

-ALL narcotic medication can cause constipation following surgery. You may buy Metamucil, Milk of Magnesia, Correctol, or Dulcolax suppositories. All are available without a prescription at the pharmacy. DO NOT allow yourself to have any problems with constipation.

-Resume all your regular medications after surgery

-Avoid aspirin products for 7 days

**-Starting Tylenol and Ibuprofen products-** These medications may be started 48 hours after surgery. Incorporating Ibuprofen will allow you to be able to taper off of your narcotic medication. Once you're no longer taking your narcotic medication (which contains Tylenol), you may start to also incorporate Tylenol for pain.

**-If you have a pain pump (also see How to Care for your Pain Pump Video):** The pain pump has a numbing medicine in it called Marcaine. This will continuously infuse over the next 72 hours. This is not a narcotic so it will not interfere with your pain prescriptions. Please keep the pain pump in the pouch provided for protection. It will take 24 hours before you start noticing a reduction in the size of the pain pump reservoir. IMPORTANT- When showering with your pain pump, be sure to place a piece of scotch tape over the little hole on the filter so water does not enter the filter. You may place your entire pain pump into a Ziploc bag for added protection from getting wet. You may notice some bloody drainage under the clear transparent dressing covering the pain pump insertion sites - this is normal - do not get

alarmed. Please do not remove these clear dressings, they are keeping the pain pump in place. Please be cautious of the tubing when moving around. DO NOT cut the tubing.

**Activity:**

-Be sure to get plenty of rest to allow your body to recuperate faster. However, it is important that you get up and walk around your house at least every 2 hours during the day to prevent developing a blood clot.

-It is best to rest in an upright position for comfort and to decrease swelling. You can either rest in a recliner or in bed with 2-3 pillows behind your back.

-Sleep on your back and wear your surgical bra for 6 weeks.

-Avoid raising your arms over shoulder level, or stretching, lifting anything heavier than 10 pounds (a gallon of milk), pushing or pulling anything for the first 4-6 weeks.

-You can resume sexual activity at least 2 weeks after surgery, or when it is no longer painful.

-You May Resume the Following Activities:

Driving 7-14 days if not on pain medications

Housework 3 weeks

Return to work in 4-6 weeks

Exercise 6 weeks

**Garment:**

-Your doctor may or may not want you to wear a bra post op. If you are instructed to wear a surgical bra, wear it day and night. Your surgical bra should NOT be tight, just fit to hold on your dressings. It may be removed to shower. The hospital will give you two, so you can wear one while washing the other. You will also receive a vest that from the hospital that you will wear to support your drains.

**Wound Care (also see How to Care for Your JP Drain Instructions and video; and Wound Care video):**

-The day after your surgery, shower. Remove your Garment and dressings to shower.

-The type of dressing you have after surgery may vary at your doctor's discretion, based on your procedure, or skin sensitivity.

-White gauze and steri-strips- To shower, remove white gauze dressing only and wash over steri- strips gently with soap and water. DO NOT remove steri-strips, if they fall off on their own that is okay. Rinse and pat dry, apply clean dressing over steri-strips. Reapply garment.

-White and yellow gauze- To shower, remove white and yellow gauze, and wash over incisions gently with soap and water. Rinse and pat dry. Apply Bacitracin ointment and clean dressings over incisions. Reapply garment.

-Clear dressing with white gauze and steri-strips- To shower, leave clear dressing in place until follow-up appointment. If dressing begins to peel away, you may remove them but leave the steri-strips in place. Reapply garment.

-If you develop any scabs or crusts along your incision when there is no steri-strip in place, take a warm wet wash cloth, soak it on your incision for 5-10 minutes, it will soften the scabs/crusts and gently clean them away.

-Kotex Pads/mini pads work great to use as dressings at home, you may use these over your drain sites as well.

-DO NOT use a bath tub, hot tub, swimming pool, pond or lake for 4 weeks.

-No smoking or second hand smoke-could cause tissue/skin loss.

-Absolutely NO ICE OR HEATING PADS to the surgical areas-you may freeze or burn your skin.

**-If you have a drain, also see How to Care for your JP Drain Instructions and Video.**

#### **When to call the Doctor:**

-If you experience any signs of infection, fever of 101.0 or higher, redness/heat, swelling, excessive drainage, purulent/odorous drainage

-If you have any problems call our office at 937-886-2980 during the week we are here until 5:00pm, if it is after hours, call our Medical Society at 937-463-1585

#### **Follow up:**

-Please make your follow up appointment in advance for 1 week after your scheduled surgery.

#### **For Your Comfort:**

-In preparing for your arrival home after surgery, set up the area where you will be resting with pillows, linens, and supplies needed for your specific surgery.

-Rather you are going to be lying in bed or a recliner (this is best if you have one available), have plenty of pillows to rest with your chest elevated, on an old sheet, towels, etc. as drainage may occur beyond the dressings.

-Have something to drink within easy reach, drink plenty of fluids following surgery to stay well hydrated.

#### **To Your Specific Procedure:**

**Mastectomy with Latissimus Muscle:** You will have an incision on your back.

**Mastectomy with TRAM Flap:** You will have an incision on you abdomen. You may have an abdominal drain along with an abdominal binder (See video on How to Wear Your Abdominal Binder). You will need to splint your abdomen to cough.