

## General Post-Operative Instructions

### General Instructions

- Someone must drive you home after surgery and help you at home for 1-2 days.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Follow balanced diet with high protein and fluid intake.
- Decreased activity may promote constipation, so you may want to add more raw 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

- Start walking as soon as possible, this helps to reduce swelling and lowers the chance of blood clots
- Do not drive until you are no longer taking any pain medications (narcotics).
- Do not drive until you have full range of motion with your arms.
- Refrain from vigorous activity for 2-6 weeks. Increase activity gradually as tolerated.
- Avoid lifting anything over 5 pounds for 2 weeks.
- Resume social and employment activities in about 2 weeks (if not too strenuous).

### Incision Care

- Leave surgical dressings on. Drainage and oozing onto the dressings and garments is expected.
- Remove dressings to shower 48 hours after surgery.
- If steri-strips were placed over incisions, keep steri-strips on, allow to fall off on their own in 2 to 3 weeks. Oozing and some bleeding through the steri-strips can occur. You may pad the incisions with gauze for comfort.
  - After steri-strips are removed, for optimal scar healing use silicone strips over incisions (you can order these from amazon or pick up at a local drug store). You can alternatively use vitamin-e lotion, tea tree oil, or cocoa butter.
- Avoid exposing scars to sun for at least 3 months.
- Always use a strong sunblock, if sun exposure is unavoidable (SPF 30 or greater). We recommend sunscreen that contains zinc oxide.
- No tub soaking/swimming for 1 month.
- If your skin surrounding your surgical area is exceedingly dry after surgery, you can apply a moisturizer several times a day, but be sure to keep the suture area dry.

### What to Expect

- Incisions may 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.
- Expect moderate drainage on your initial dressing, it is not uncommon for this to seep onto the surgical dressings
- 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 in the incision area.
- You may not have sensation in the nipples, surrounding skin, or along the incisions. This usually returns with time but can take up to 12 to 18 months.
- You may have random, shooting pains and itching throughout your abdomen/back/flanks and along incisions for a few months. This is part of the normal healing process.

## Appearance

- Most of the discoloration and swelling will subside in 2-4 weeks.
- The surgical area will feel firm to the touch, this will soften over the next 3 to 6 months.
- Scars may be red and angry looking for 6 months. In time, these usually soften and fade.

## Follow-Up Care

- Follow up within 1 week of surgery. Expect additional follow up appointments 3 weeks and 3 months after your surgery.
- All sutures will be dissolvable unless otherwise stated.

## When to Call

- 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 increased swelling or bruising.
- If swelling and redness persist after a few days.
- If you have increased redness along the incision.
- 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 contact:

- Katie Leemaster PA-C at [katie@districtps.com](mailto:katie@districtps.com) or Dr. Praful Ramineni at [doc@districtps.com](mailto:doc@districtps.com)
- (202) 742-3999, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Please Email Jackie at [jackie@districtps.com](mailto:jackie@districtps.com) to set up your post op appointment for Monday/Thursday \_\_\_\_\_ (please give preference of morning or afternoon post op appointment).