

Bilateral Mastectomy 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, increases the risk of complications.**

Follow-Up Care

- **Leave binder and dressings in place until follow up appointment.**
- Follow up in office within 1 week, 3 weeks, and 3 months of surgery unless otherwise directed by your surgeon.
- Record drain output and bring drain logs to your first follow up appointment. If drainage is minimal, drains will be removed at the first post-op appointment.

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 chest exercises and lifting anything over 5 pounds for 4 weeks.
- Resume social and employment activities in about 2 weeks (if not too strenuous).
- Wear your surgical vest as directed for 3 to 4 weeks post op.
- If your chest skin is exceedingly dry after surgery, you can apply a moisturizer several times a day, but be sure to keep the suture area clean and dry.

What to Expect

- 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.
- Expect moderate drainage on your initial dressing, it is not uncommon for this to seep onto the surgical vest.
- Maximum discomfort will occur the first few days after surgery.
- You may experience temporary soreness, bruising, swelling and tightness in the chest as well as discomfort around your incisions.
- You may have random, shooting pains and itching throughout your chest and along incisions for a few months. This is part of the normal healing process.

Incision Care

- Remove vest and dressings to shower 72 hours after surgery. Replace and wear surgical vest until follow up.
- 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 breast skin is exceedingly dry after surgery, you can apply a moisturizer several times a day, but be sure to keep the suture area dry.

Appearance

- Most of the discoloration and swelling will subside in 2-4 weeks.
- Scars may be red and angry looking for 6 months. In time, these usually soften and fade.

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 or Dr. Praful Ramineni at doc@districtps.com

Your post op appointment is scheduled for _____