

Recovery/Post-operative Instructions
Mastectomy with Lymph Node Biopsy

Diet/Bowel Care

- You may resume your regular diet starting with bland (non-greasy, non-spicy) food, in small portions, that is easy to digest on the day of surgery
- Drink plenty of fluids to keep well hydrated as your body is recovering (juices, water, broth, sports drinks).
- Having surgery and narcotic pain medications can cause your bowels to slow down, and can cause constipation.

You should start taking a stool softener (Colace or generic Ducosate Sodium) 100mg twice daily (available over the counter), starting the day before your surgery. Stop after your first bowel movement.

- If you go more than 2-3 days without a bowel movement you may use a Fleet Enema

Medications

• **Pain medications**

- o You will be given a prescription for pain medication (narcotics) and an anti-nausea medication. It is important to take these, as instructed, to keep your pain and nausea controlled.
- o The most commonly prescribed narcotics include: Percocet, Oxycodone, Ultram, Vicodin, Tylenol with Codeine, or generic versions of these.
- o The narcotic pain medication can make you sleepy and dizzy – you should not drive a vehicle while taking narcotics, and you should not drink alcohol while taking them. Narcotics can also cause nausea in some people so it is best to take them with food. Some people may have itching with narcotics; unless you have a rash, this is not an allergic reaction, just a side effect. You can take Benadryl to help with the itching.

• **Regular Prescription Medications**

- o You may resume your regular medications immediately after surgery (either in the evening after surgery or the following morning), unless told otherwise by the surgeon.
- o If you were given antibiotics, take them as instructed to completion.

General Wound Care

- Keep the dressings clean and dry for first 48 hrs (no showering). After 48 hrs, you may remove the gauze over your incisions and you may shower; wash and dry wounds gently with soap and water; no dressing is needed after the first 48hrs.
- No soaking in tub or pool for 2 weeks following surgery.
- If you have steri-strips (white paper tapes), leave these on until they fall off on their own.
- **MOST PEOPLE** will have “skin glue”/glue tape over the incisions, this will wear off in about one week; **do not** try to scrub it off.
- You’ll go home with at least 1 drain in place. The drain(s) will usually be removed about 2 weeks after your surgery but may be left in longer. you will be instructed on how to take care of this.
- Some bruising and soreness is expected around the incisions. As you’re healing, you may feel a few different sensations in your breast. Tenderness, numbness, and twinges are common examples. These sensations usually come and go and will lessen over time, usually within the first few months after surgery.

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- A week or two after your surgery, a pocket of fluid may form under the skin of your armpit or chest area where tissue was removed. This is called a seroma, and it's harmless. The area may feel soft and puffy. It may also feel tender.

Emotional Support

- After surgery for a serious illness, you may have new and upsetting feelings. Many people say they felt weepy, sad, worried, nervous, irritable, and angry at one time or another. You may find that you can't control some of these feelings. If this happens, it's a good idea to seek emotional support.

****If you are a smoker, you should quit smoking to help with your overall health and recovery and with your wound healing.**

Sleeping

- You may be more comfortable in an upright or reclined position. Pillows, arm pillows or recliner chairs are all good options

Clothing

- You may find that lifting your arms might be difficult. Wearing button-front shirts and sleep garments will make this easier. You will be fitted with a compression garment or post-operative bra. Do not remove.
- You will be given a prescription for postmastectomy bras/bathing suits 4-6 weeks after surgery if you have not elected to have reconstruction.

Activity

- You should be up walking around your house several times per day after surgery. This improves circulation and helps prevent complications after surgery. Walking outside and doing stairs are acceptable, and you can increase your activity as you can tolerate.
- No lifting, pushing or pulling more than 5 pounds and no aerobic exercise (other than regular walking), no sexual activity until your follow-up office visit. Further restrictions will be discussed at that time.
- You may return to work or school as you feel you are ready, with restrictions
- **NO DRIVING FOR at least 1 week AFTER SURGERY AND WHILE TAKING NARCOTICS.** You may drive when you feel that you can safely operate the vehicle (think about turning or stopping suddenly, maybe take a test drive in a safe area first).

****Call the surgeon's office: 561.333.1335 if you experience any of the following:**

(If you call after hours or on the weekend you will get the answering service and you will speak to the doctor on-call)

- Temperature higher than 101.5
- Any chest pain or difficulty breathing.
- Redness (more than a ¼ inch around the wound)/drainage/bleeding/pus from wound(s) or IV sites.
- Increased pain at incisions. Some pain is expected but should get progressively better over about a week.
- Any other concerns or questions regarding your surgery or recovery.

Follow-up Visits

Your surgeon would like to see you in the office about 1 week after your procedure. Call our office at 561.333.1335 2-3 days after surgery, to make an appointment.

Please call with any concerns regarding your surgery or recovery.