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Recovery/Post-operative Instructions

Mastectomy

If you smoke or vape, consider quitting to support wound healing and recovery.

DIET & BOWEL CARE

Resume bland, non-greasy, non-spicy foods in small portions the day of surgery. Drink plenty of fluids (water, juice, broth, sports drinks). To prevent constipation, start Colace (Docusate Sodium) 100mg twice daily the day before surgery; stop after your first bowel movement. **TAKE WITH 12 OZ COLD WATER** If no bowel movement in 2–3 days, use a Fleet Enema. **NO STIMULANT LAXATIVES**

MEDICATIONS

Pain: You may be prescribed narcotics (e.g., Percocet, Oxycodone, Ultram, Vicodin, Tylenol with Codeine) and an anti-nausea medication.

- *Do not drive or consume alcohol while on narcotics.*
- Take with food. Benadryl may help itching (if no rash).

Regular Meds: Resume the evening of surgery or the next morning unless told otherwise. Finish all prescribed antibiotics.

WOUND CARE

Keep dressings clean and dry for 48 hrs (no showering). After 48 hrs, remove gauze and shower gently with soap and water—do not scrub; pat dry. No soaking in a tub or pool for 2 weeks.

- **Steri-strips:** Let fall off on their own
- **Skin glue:** Will wear off in ~1 week—do not scrub
- **Drains:** You'll go home with 1+ drains, usually removed ~2 weeks after surgery; care instructions will be provided
- Expect bruising, soreness, tenderness, numbness, or twinges—these may last several months
- A soft, puffy area may develop in your armpit/chest (seroma)—this is normal and harmless

SLEEPING & CLOTHING

You may be more comfortable in an upright or reclined position with pillows or a recliner.

Avoid lifting arms overhead—wear **button-front shirts or sleepwear**.

Do not remove the **post-op bra or compression garment**. A prescription for postmastectomy bras/swimsuits will be given 4–6 weeks after surgery if no reconstruction is done.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

It's normal to feel sad, anxious, or irritable after surgery. These feelings often pass, but don't hesitate to seek emotional support if needed.

ACTIVITY

Walk several times daily to promote circulation and reduce complications.

- No lifting/pulling/pushing >5 lbs
- No aerobic activity or sexual activity until cleared
- Return to work/school as tolerated, with restrictions
- **Do not drive for at least 1 week or while taking narcotics**

CALL 561.333.1335 IF YOU EXPERIENCE: (After hours/weekends, you'll speak with the on-call doctor)

- Fever >101.5°F
- Chest pain or difficulty breathing
- Redness >¼", bleeding, pus, or drainage at incision/IV site
- Worsening pain or swelling at the incision
- Any other concerns during recovery

FOLLOW-UP VISIT

Call 2–3 days post-op to schedule your follow-up visit (about 1 week after surgery).

For questions or concerns, call: **561.333.1335**