

BREAST SURGERY

Showering and incision care

You may start to shower 48 hours after surgery. However, you will need to wait until after the sutures are removed before you can soak the incision in a bathtub or pool. During the first few weeks after surgery, you may wear a soft cup bra or a camisole. Do not wear a bra with underwire for 6 weeks after surgery. An underwire may cause skin breakdown or cause the incision to open up.

Tegaderms, a clear plastic tape, and glue are usually placed over your incision. You may use soap and water over these and dab the area dry. With time as they begin to peel, trim only the peeled portions. Do not remove the entire tegaderm unless it is loose.

You may have steristrips over the incisions. Keeping these paper tapes on the incision for 4 weeks will significantly improve the quality of the final scar.

You may resume normal activity in one or two weeks.

Activity

Exercise your lower extremities while you are in bed. This will reduce the risk of developing blood clots in your legs.

*Flex and point your feet

*Do ankle rolls

*Bend and straighten your knees

Do this several times a day until you are walking as much as usual

You may walk and climb stairs as soon as you feel fit to do so without any restrictions.

Do not lift anything over 10 pounds for 4 weeks after surgery.

Do not take part in sports or any strenuous activities for 6 weeks after surgery

Smoking

Do not smoke for at least 6 weeks before and after surgery. Stay away from places where people do. Smoking can slow healing and cause skin breakdown. It can also cause death of tissues.

Sun and heat exposure

Your surgery will leave a scar and it may take well over a year to fade and blend in with surrounding skin. No matter how small the scar, sunlight can cause permanent darkening of your scar. Sunlight can even go through your clothes.

Do not expose your incision/scar to direct sunlight for a year from the time of surgery. Use sunscreen with a SPF for at least 30 when you go out. Wait for 3 weeks from the date surgery before starting to use sunscreen.

Do not use heat of any kind (heat lamp, heating pad, sauna, hot tub, tanning booth) for at least 12 weeks after surgery or permanently if you have areas of decreased sensation around the scars.

Other instructions

For 10 days after the operation, do not use Aspirin, ibuprofen or similar medications. Please see enclosed list for details. You may use regular Tylenol.

You should do breathing exercises for one week after surgery or until you are able to get up and walk around comfortably. This is to prevent pulmonary complications of general anesthesia.

Do not drive, operate machinery or make important decisions when taking narcotic pain medicine. They can make you sleepy and slow your reaction time.

Do not use any scar creams or ointments on the incision without consulting your surgeon.

When to call

Call the office if you are unable to tolerate food or liquids for more than 24 hours; are vomiting for more than 24 hours or become dehydrated even if less than 24 hours.

Call the office immediately for a fever of 101F or higher.

Call the office if there is increasing pain, redness, swelling, and warmth or pus drainage at the incision.

Drain care

When you get home, keep a track of how much is drained from each drain (**in milliliters**) over a 24-hour period (7AM to 7AM, noon to noon or any other 24 hour period that is consistent from day to day).

Empty the drain bulb when it is half full. If the drain bulb fills completely, it will not be effective in removing fluid from the area where it is placed.

Make sure to keep track of each drain tube separately

You may shower with the drains in place; after the shower, apply an over the counter antibiotic ointment to the skin around the drain.

You may use a gauze sponge around the drain site if there is leakage of fluid

Call the office if there is sudden rapid filling of the drain bulb with blood, if the hourly drainage is over 50cc for 3 continuous hours or if the drainage appears cloudy or infected.