

# DIEP FLAP BREAST RECONSTRUCTION

## Post-Surgical Guide



### INCISIONS

- Your incisions are closed in multiple layers with absorbable sutures.
- The surface will be sealed with a medical glue and/or glue tape.
- Your abdominal closure may feel tight. Keep your body flexed when in bed by placing two pillows behind your back and a pillow under your knees or relaxing in a recliner. When walking, you may need to bend at the knees and tip forward at the hips to relieve tension for the first week or two.
- ABSOLUTELY NO ICE or HEATING PADS to surgical sites.

### DRAINS

- See Drain Care Instruction Guide for information regarding drain care and output measurement.
- Drains typically stay in until they are outputting about 20 ml or less per 24 hours.

### ACTIVITY

- Expect a 6-8 week recovery after surgery.
- Arms must stay by your side for the first 2 weeks. No reaching or lifting. You will need someone to help with activities such as washing your hair.
- "Robe and slippers" recovery for the first 2 weeks. Relax, rest and do light activity only. Be sure to take short walks throughout the house frequently during the day.
- After 2 weeks, you may elevate arms to 90 degrees (goal posts), but not above shoulders.
- No twisting, or lifting greater than 10 lbs for 6 weeks.
- No pressure on breasts.
- You must sleep on your back for 4 weeks.
- No underwire bras for 6 weeks.
- May drive after 2 weeks if off all prescription pain medication.
- Patients typically return to work at 6 weeks. You may be able to return to "light duty" at 4 weeks, or may need longer than 6 weeks for more strenuous jobs.

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### SHOWER

- You will shower on the day of discharge prior to leaving the hospital.
- Once home, wait a few days before showering again. When you do, use your hand or a very soft, clean washcloth to wash your incisions. Do not rub the area. Pat dry.
- No soaking in a bath or swimming until cleared by the office. This is typically 4 weeks after surgery or once all the scabbing is gone from your incisions.

### MEDICATIONS

- See detailed medication information sheet.
- Prevent constipation while taking narcotic pain medication by taking one dose of Miralax and two doses of Colace daily until you are having normal bowel movements.

### EMERGENCIES

- Call the office immediately for:
  - Temperature greater than 101 degrees
  - Significant increase in swelling or one breast more swollen than the other
  - Extreme pain not controlled by pain medication
  - Redness of incisions or pus/yellow/green drainage
  - Darkened or blackened skin (in excess of normal bruising)
- **\*\*After hours, call Medlink Paging Service at (512) 323-5465\*\***