



Implant Reconstruction: Hospital Course

When you leave the operating room, you will be transported to the recovery room. You will be awake. You will spend a few hours in the recovery room. Here you will begin drinking and eating. Special stockings connected to a pneumatic pump will be placed on your legs so that you don't get a blood clot. These will be removed when you begin to walk. Once you are more aware, you will be transported to a floor specializing in breast reconstruction.

After arriving to your room, the nursing team will assist you in getting out of the bed. First you will go to sitting in a chair. Based on how you do, the Foley catheter will be removed. This will have been placed in the operating room while you were under anesthesia. Removal of the catheter is simple and painless. By removing the catheter, we are allowing you to walk to the bathroom.

There will be drains at the breast reconstruction sites. These are about the thickness of a pencil and go from inside your body to an outside collection device that looks like a grenade. The drains are used to remove fluid that is normally produced by the body after surgery. They are removed in the office (after discharge from the hospital) when they stop draining which is usually at one to two weeks after the surgery.

In the operating room, long acting nerve blocks will be performed. This will eliminate the need for pain pumps and narcotic medications. Nonetheless, if you still experience some pain and discomfort, pain medications will be given for you to take by mouth.

Your IV will be removed once you are able to drink enough fluids. Caffeinated beverages, such as soda and coffee, are allowed but hydration with water is encouraged. Most women may also experience constipation due to the pain medication, anesthesia, and limited activity. Once your return to your regular daily diet and activity level, this problem should resolve. Adequate hydration and a high fiber diet will help with constipation.

Patients will typically be discharged from the hospital and go home on the first or second day following surgery. While you are getting ready to go home, detailed discharge instructions will be provided.

Implant Reconstruction: Discharge Instructions

In an effort to make you more comfortable with discharge home and to answer any questions you may have, I have prepared an instructional sheet for you. However, you may call the office at any time with additional questions or concerns.

For the Breast:

You have just undergone implant based breast reconstruction. Your breast will likely have bruising that is expected after a mastectomy. You may be given a surgical bra at the time of surgery. It is optional for you to wear this, for your comfort and support. However, underwire bras are not to be worn in the immediate period after surgery.

Incisions:

The incisions most likely have a sterile glue or white paper strips (steristrips) that have been placed on them. Leave these strips in place, they will fall off on their own. No separate wound care is required for the incisions. Application of ointments, dressings, or lotions is not necessary. Do not massage the incisions until we instruct you in the office (6 weeks after surgery).

Drains:

The breast reconstruction will have drains. It is important to empty the drains twice daily and record the outputs. Please bring this sheet to your appointment after surgery. Based on the output, the drains will be removed 1 to 3 weeks after surgery. For the drains to be working appropriately, the bulbs need to be collapsed to create a light suction. The nurse in the hospital will review the drain care with you and your family prior to discharge home. It is best to safely secure the drains to your clothes with a safety pin.

Sleep

Sleep on your back for the first two weeks after surgery.

Showering:

- You may take a shower 48 hours after the surgery date. After the shower, pat dry the surgical site. Alternatively, you can allow it to air dry.
- Do not take a bath or submerge yourself in water.
- You will have special adhesive glue or white paper strips (steri strips) over the incisions. Do not remove these.

Pain Control and Prescriptions:

- A prescription for pain medication will be sent to your pharmacy. Take this pain medication as prescribed as needed for moderate to severe pain. For less severe pain, you may

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take over the counter Tylenol (acetaminophen), instead of the prescribed pain medication.

- Your prescription pain medication may contain acetaminophen. For example, Percocet (oxycodone/acetaminophen) contains 325mg of Tylenol. Do not exceed 4000 mg of Tylenol (acetaminophen) from all sources in a 24-hour period.
- Narcotic pain medication can be constipating, so drink plenty of water and non-caffeinated beverages to help with regular bowel movements. It is important not to strain to have a bowel movement. Any straining can jeopardize your safety and recovery.
- You may be prescribed a muscle relaxant (diazepam) and/or antibiotic. Take these as directed.
- Please do not drive while taking narcotic pain medication

Activity:

- Rest at home during the first few days after surgery.
- Walking is encouraged, but strenuous exercise is not allowed until 6 weeks after surgery. Sitting in a comfortable chair is better than sitting in bed.
- Avoid strenuous activity. Do not lift more than 5-10 pounds. A dedicated post-mastectomy rehabilitation and exercise program will be started 2 weeks after surgery.
- Return to work varies depending on your type of job. Many patients return to work after approximately 4 to 6 weeks with light duty or restriction.

Call the Office:

Do not hesitate to call the office with any concerns or questions. A doctor is available to answer your questions 24 hours a day. Please notify us immediately if:

1. You have increased swelling, pain, or color change in the breast.
2. One breast becomes suddenly significantly larger than the other breast.
3. You have redness develop around the incisions.
4. You have a fever greater than 101 F.
5. You develop sudden increase in pain.
6. You develop drainage, spreading redness or foul odor
7. You have any questions.