

POST-SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS: BREAST REDUCTION

The following is a list of normal post-surgical experiences and key health considerations that may be a cause of concern.

TYPICAL POST-OPERATIVE SYMPTOMS

Typical symptoms of breast surgery; and signs to watch for following breast reduction surgery include the following:

Tightness in the chest region and stiffness; Tingling, burning or intermittent shooting pain: These are normal experiences as the skin, tissues and sensory nerves heal. Pain medication and muscle relaxants will help you cope with any discomfort. If you have drains, you may experience additional localized discomfort. **Consistent sharp pain should be reported to our office immediately.**

Hypersensitivity of nipples, or lack of sensitivity: This is normal and will gradually resolve over time. You may also experience a small amount of fluid or milk seeping through the nipples. **If this becomes painful or excessive, notify our office immediately.**

Shiny skin or any itchy feeling: Swelling can cause the breast's skin to appear shiny. As the healing process advances, you may also find a mild to severe itchy feeling of the breasts. An antihistamine like Benadryl can help to alleviate severe, constant itchiness. **If the skin becomes red and hot to the touch, contact our office immediately.**

Asymmetry, the breasts look different, or heal differently: Breasts may look or feel quite different from one another in the days following surgery. This is normal; no two breasts are perfectly symmetrical in nature or following surgery.

CALL THE OFFICE IMMEDIATELY IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- **A high fever, (over 101°) severe nausea and vomiting, continued dizziness or incoherent behavior, such as hallucinations.**
- **Any pain that cannot be controlled by your pain medication.**
- **Bright red skin that is hot to the touch.**
- **Excessive bleeding or fluid seeping through the incisions.**
- **A severely misshapen breast or bruising that is localized to one breast or region of the chest.**

To alleviate any discomfort, and to reduce swelling, you may apply cool, not cold compresses to the treated region. Crushed ice or ice packs must be wrapped in a towel before being applied to the skin. Do not apply ice or anything frozen directly to the skin. Apply cool compresses, for no longer than 20-minute intervals. Be careful not to fall asleep with the cool compresses.

You will only be released to the care of a responsible adult. All of these instructions must be clear to the adult who will monitor your health and support you, around the clock in the first 24 hours after surgery.

NO SMOKING OR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

- **This is very important.** Smoking, vaping, or other forms of nicotine consumption will disrupt wound healing. Do not consume any nicotine or alcohol for at least 3 weeks after surgery.

DRESSINGS:

- **Do not touch your incisions.** In particular, do not remove the steri-strips or surgical tape that we put over your stitches. Your incisions may seep fluid and some blood for a short time after surgery, but this is normal.
- **Wear your bra around the clock.** You may take off the surgical bra 48 hours after surgery in order to shower, but continue wearing one afterwards until we tell you to stop. After 1 week, you may sleep without the bra; however, a camisole with built-in shelf support can be comfortable and provides added support as you continue to heal.
- **No under wires for 6 weeks.** You can replace the bra provided at the time of surgery and buy your own. However, please make sure it does not have under wires.

SHOWERING

- **You may shower 48 hours after surgery.** Take a warm, but not hot shower. Do not take a bath. Limit your shower to 10 minutes. Do not remove the steri-strips/surgical tape that we put over your stitches. After the shower, you can pat dry with a towel or air-dry, but do not rub your breasts or touch the incisions. You can apply a fragrance-free moisturizer to breast and surrounding skin, but not on the incisions. You can also use deodorant.

DRAINS

- **Follow the drain care instructions provided to you.** If you have a drain placed in your incisions, a nurse should have shown you how to operate the drain, empty the drain, and record the amount of fluid from the drain. When showering, you should secure the drains with a lanyard or wrap so that they are not dangling down.

MEDICATION

- **Oral pain medication will be prescribed.** Take this medication for moderate or severe pain. For less severe pain, use over-the-counter Tylenol (acetaminophen). Do not take aspirin, Motrin (ibuprofen), or Aleve until 48 hours after surgery.
- **Do not consume 4000 mg of Tylenol (acetaminophen) in a 24-hour period.** Prescription pain medication can contain acetaminophen (Percocet contains oxycodone and 325 mg acetaminophen), so watch all possible sources.

SLEEPING

- **You may sleep flat.** However, do not sleep on your stomach. If you are a side sleeper, a soft pillow under your mid-back and shoulders may be more comfortable than a single pillow under your head. In the first week after surgery, make sure to wear your support bra while sleeping.

ACTIVITY

- **Rest, but not bed rest:** While rest is important in the early stages of healing, equally important is that you are ambulatory, meaning that you are walking under your own strength. We encourage you to drink lots of water, because you will do enough walking by just going to the bathroom several times a day. It is essential to walk every day, because it prevents blood clots from forming.
- **Do not engage in any stressful activities.** Do not resume any exercise other than regular walking. Do not lift your hands over your head. Do not lift anything heavier than a paperback book. Take care of no one, and let others tend to you.
- **Ease into your daily activities.** You will receive clearance to begin driving or return to work at your first post-operative office visit.

NUTRITION

- **Fluids are critical following surgery.** Stick to non-carbonated, non-alcoholic, caffeine-free, and green tea-free beverages, such as fruit juices, water, milk, and yogurt drinks. You must consume at least 8 ounces of fluid every 2 hours. Stick with soft, bland, and nutritious food for the first 24 hours.

FOLLOW-UP

- The office will call you to schedule your post-operative office visit, which should take place about 1 week after surgery.