

1st Stage Breast Reconstruction

Post-Op & Care Instructions

General Discharge Instructions

- Anesthesia will be in your body for the next 24 hours, because of this you may be sleepy, dizzy, and/or lightheaded. These feelings will wear off slowly.
- You will stay the first night in the hospital.
- For the first 24 hours, **do not**:
 - Stay alone
 - Drive a car, operate machinery/power tools
 - Drink alcohol
- Showering: You can shower 24 hours after surgery.
 - Showering with drains; use a lanyard or string to hold your drains.
 - Warm water can intensify the effects of pain medicine, be cautious in case you feel lightheaded.
- No bath, hot tub or swimming until you are cleared by Dr. Min.
- No ice or heat to surgical site. Sensation can be decreased for some time after the procedure and you can burn or freeze your skin.
- Do not smoke and avoid second hand smoke when possible. This can cause delay in skin healing.

Diet

- Eat a light diet following surgery. Avoid spicy, greasy, fried or gaseous foods for the first 24 hours. If you experience nausea, use your nausea medication (ondansetron/Zofran).
- Protein intake should be around 60 grams a day, to help with skin healing.
- Stay hydrated, drink plenty of fluids. 64 oz of water a day.

Activity & Positioning

- Sleep and relax at an incline (~45°) for the first 3-5 days, or as long as it helps with your swelling/comfort. You can use extra pillows in bed or a recliner.
- Rest, but not bedrest. Make sure (while awake) you get up and walk around every 2-3 hours to prevent blood clots.
- No breast massage is needed.
- Let common sense and comfort be your guide. If something is painful, get help or avoid it.
- Avoid activity that will increase your heart rate or blood pressure.
 - Keep heart rate below 100 beats per minute. Elevated heart rate can cause increase in swelling & pain.
 - Elevated blood pressure can cause bleeding.
- Avoid lifting anything heavier than 10lbs for 4-6 weeks. If you do need to lift anything, hold the item close to your body at all times.
- Avoid pushing, pulling & raising your arms over shoulder level for 4 weeks (you can do your hair).
 - Avoid chores and household duties that involve frequent upper arm movements for at least 2 weeks (vacuuming, dishes, laundry, etc.).
- You can drive when you are no longer taking narcotic pain medicine and your range of motion is safe to drive.
- If you notice an increase in pain or swelling, you may need to decrease your activity.
- Do not start physical therapy until cleared by Dr. Min.

Garment

- Wear your Wacoal surgical bra (*after drains are removed*) as much as tolerated for 4 weeks.
- Wear this bra day and night.
- You can remove it to launder and shower.

Medications

- Antibiotic
 - Start your antibiotic after surgery with a meal (ie. Dinner). Complete the course of antibiotics. If you have drains, continue antibiotic until your drains are removed (you have 2 refills on your original prescription).
- Pain Medicine
 - Take narcotic pain medicine as prescribed. Wean off of the narcotics to Tylenol or ibuprofen when able. Generally, patients need narcotic pain medicine for the first 5-7 days.
 - If this medicine causes *nausea*, try taking your nausea medicine 20-30 minutes before.
 - If this medicine causes *itching*, try taking Benadryl or an anti-histamine.
 - This medicine can cause *constipation*, have over-the-counter stool softeners (ie. Senna, Miralax, Colace) at home. If you are prone to constipation, start stool softeners when you get home on your surgery day.
 - Do not drive while taking narcotic pain medicine.
- Muscle Relaxer (Robaxin)
 - Take this medication as needed for muscle spasms. It can be taken at the same time as your pain medicine.
- Nausea Medicine (Ondansetron/Zofran)
 - Take when nausea is present. If the pain medicine is causing nausea, take this medicine 20-30 minutes before.
- Scopolamine Patch
 - This patch helps with nausea & can be left on for 72 hours. Most common side effects are dry mouth and blurry vision, if these occur remove patch and wash location where patch was placed. After removal, wash hands.

Pain & Sensation

- With any surgery there is some discomfort or pain. While in the hospital, you may receive a pain reliever through an IV.
- Before you go home, you will be switched from the IV to an oral narcotic.
- We will give you a prescription for a narcotic pain pill to take at home.
- You may also use an anti-inflammatory (ibuprofen).
- Take pain relievers as prescribed and only as needed.
- You may have nerve pain after your surgery because the nerve endings have been disturbed. Nerve pain may feel like a burning sensation, itching or a shooting, electric shock pain. This is normal and will get better as you heal. However, some women can have nerve pain even years after their surgery.
- Loss of sensation is an unfortunate result of a mastectomy. How much feeling is regained will be different for each person.
- Most women regain some feeling in their new breast(s) as the nerves grow back.
- Typically, some areas remain numb permanently, but most numbness improves with time

Swelling

- Moderate bruising and swelling of the breasts are normal the first few weeks after surgery.
- This swelling will last for one to three months and increase with activity.
- The swelling will gradually go down, but it may remain for three to six months.
- In the first six months, expect your breasts to feel firm and to appear larger because of swelling. They will also feel lumpy because of scar tissue.

Drains

- You may have a drain(s) placed at each reconstructed breast to prevent fluid from collecting under your skin. While in the hospital, the nurses will teach you how to care for your drain(s) (see your Drain Care handout) as you will be discharged with the drains still in place.
- When each drain is draining 30 ml or less in a 24-hour period, you may call the clinic to arrange for removal of your drains.
- Drain removal is usually not painful and only takes a few seconds. Expect to have your drains for 1-2 weeks, sometimes more.
- To hold your drain(s), try a lanyard, fanny pack, small draw-string bags, safety pins, a camisole with pockets or a bathrobe/jacket turned inside out (so that drains may be placed in the pockets).
- You will be on antibiotics while your drains are in. If your prescription runs out while you have drains, contact our office (you should have 2 refills from your first prescription).

Wound Care

- Your incisions will have steri-strips over them. These will come off on their own, if they start to peel, you can trim the loose edges.
- Sutures are dissolvable and they will dissolve over the next few months.
 - If you feel these sutures poking out, this is normal. You can trim it.
- The suture holding your drain is not dissolvable, these will be removed with the drain.
- Incisions may have drainage over the first 1-2 days, dry gauze can be placed over the incision & steri-strips.

When to call the doctor

- High fever (101^F or greater)
- Pain that cannot be controlled by your pain medication
- Bright red skin that is hot to the touch
- Excessive drainage or bleeding from incisions
- One side is severely more swollen than the other

If you have any questions about anything dealing your surgical site, do not hesitate to call and ask.
Phone # 425-463-9883