

# **BREAST RECONSTRUCTION**

## **POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

### **General Instructions**

- Please contact us for any serious change in your symptoms, or any new symptoms of concern.
- Walk on the evening of surgery. You will need assistance when walking at first to prevent falls.
- Walk gently for 15-20 minutes, 5-6 times per day starting on post-operative day 1.
- Do leg lifts/non-weighted leg exercises periodically while sitting.
- We recommend you wear lower extremity compression stockings 23 hours a day for at least 2 weeks. These may be purchased online or at a drug store. They do not have to be custom fit.
- Practice deep breathing exercises.
- Drink water to stay hydrated.

### **Medication Instructions**

- Take medications as prescribed. You will be prescribed an antibiotic.
- Over the counter Tylenol is recommended as the primary pain relief medication. Please check the label on your bottle to remain aware of dosages. Opioids can be used for breakthrough pain and should be weaned in the first week after surgery. Some patients only require Tylenol, but every patient is different. Complying with the general post-operative instructions will help with pain control as well.
- No more than 3 grams of Tylenol should be taken in a 24-hour period.
- You may develop constipation when taking opioid pain medications. You should continue drinking plenty of fluids. Take Colace twice a day starting on post-operative day 1. You may take your preferred over the counter bowel regimen as well. You should have regular bowel movements. You should avoid straining, which can be avoided with hydration and stool softeners.
- Do not drive or operate heavy machinery while taking any opioid pain medication. Use caution with opioid medications as they have addictive potential. Do not use other sedative medications, sleep aids, or alcohol in the post-operative setting.

### **Wound Care and Dressings**

- You may take a bath or shower 72 hours after surgery. You should keep your back towards the shower head. You may let water gently run over your wound from the back. Do not rub or scrub near the incision lines. If there are steri-strips or skin glue on your incision, they can get wet in the shower.
  - Drain sites should not be immersed in water. Cover them with a piece of gauze and Tegaderm in the shower. Replace this after you pat dry.
  - You may also sponge bathe in the shower if that is more convenient.
  - Do not immerse yourself or soak in a bathtub.
- No pools, hot tubs, or submerging in bodies of water for 4-6 weeks.
- If steri-strips/glue are covering your wound, leave these in place until your follow up appointment. If they fall off, you may leave them off.
- If you have drains in place, follow appropriate drain care regimens.
  - Drain care: measure total output over 24-hour periods:
    - You will need to empty the drains at least every 6-8 hours and then keep track of the 24-hour total.

- Use a clean measuring cup to measure the fluid quantity and record the output. The 24 hour total will determine if the drain can be removed.
- Typically, the drain should measure less than 30ml for 2 consecutive days before it is removed in the clinic.
- Please keep drain sites clean using peroxide or alcohol swab and then cover with gauze dressing. This will help prevent infection.
- Do not contaminate the inside of the drain.
- If there is clear-pink drainage around the drain site, reinforce with clean gauze.
- Call the clinic with any questions.

### **Activity**

- No strenuous activity for 4 weeks. No running, biking, lifting weights, contact sports, swimming, golfing, etc. However, walking is recommended for general well-being and prevention of blood clots.
- Do not lift over 3 lbs for 4 weeks.

### **Recovery**

- Most patients take at least 14 days off work for recovery. This time varies by specific occupational demands. Some patients take up to 4-6 weeks off work. You will need help with household tasks for at least 7 days, depending on the level of demands.

### **Call us if...**

- If you are unable to keep fluids or medications down due to vomiting.
- If you have shaking chills, fever greater than 101.5 (F) or 38 (C), increased redness, swelling or discharge from incision, chest pain, shortness of breath, or anything else that is troubling you.
- If you have questions outside clinic hours, call the main hospital line 617-667-7000 and ask to speak with the plastic surgery team.

### **Follow Up**

- Your first clinic follow-up after surgery will be 1 week after surgery and then the second appointment will be the following week. If you do not have an appointment scheduled, please call the clinic to schedule an appointment.
- At your one-week clinic visit, the dressings will be removed.
- The Plastic Surgery Clinic phone number is: 617-632-7827

## DRAIN MEASUREMENT LOG FOR PATIENTS

- You will need to empty the drains at least every 6-8 hours and then keep track of the 24-hour total. The 24-hour total will determine if the drain can be removed.
- Use a clean measuring cup to measure the fluid quantity and record the output.
- Please enter the number of milliliters (cc's) out of each drain over the entire 24-hour period. This will help us decide when the drains can be removed.
- Typically, the drain should measure less than 30ml for 2 consecutive days before it is removed.
- Please keep drain sites clean using peroxide or alcohol swab and then cover with gauze dressing.
- Do not contaminate the inside of the drain.
- If there is clear-pink drainage around the drain site, reinforce with clean gauze.
- Call the clinic with any questions.
- The Plastic Surgery Clinic phone number is: 617-632-7827

	Drain 1 Side: ____	Drain 2 Side: ____	Drain 3 Side: ____	Drain 4 Side: ____
Time 1:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 2:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 3:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 4:	ml	ml	ml	ml
	ml	ml	ml	ml
Post-operative end of Day 1: Total over 24 hrs	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 1:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 2:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 3:	ml	ml	ml	ml

Time 4:	ml	ml	ml	ml
	ml	ml	ml	ml
Post-operative Day 2: 24 hours Total	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 1:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 2:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 3:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 4:	ml	ml	ml	ml
	ml	ml	ml	ml
Post-operative Day 3: 24 hours Total	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 1:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 2:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 3:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 4:	ml	ml	ml	ml
	ml	ml	ml	ml

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Post-operative Day 4: 24 hours Total	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 1:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 2:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 3:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 4:	ml	ml	ml	ml
	ml	ml	ml	ml
Post-operative Day 5: 24 hours Total	ml	ml	ml	ml
	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 1:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 2:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 3:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 4:	ml	ml	ml	ml
	ml	ml	ml	ml
Post-operative Day 6: 24 hours Total	ml	ml	ml	ml

Time 1:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 2:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 3:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 4:	ml	ml	ml	ml
	ml	ml	ml	ml
Post-operative Day 7: 24 hours Total	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 1:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 2:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 3:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 4:	ml	ml	ml	ml
	ml	ml	ml	ml
Post-operative Day 8: 24 hours Total	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 1:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 2:	ml	ml	ml	ml

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Time 3:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 4:	ml	ml	ml	ml
	ml	ml	ml	ml
Post-operative Day 9: 24 hours Total	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 1:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 2:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 3:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 4:	ml	ml	ml	ml
	ml	ml	ml	ml
Day 10: 24 hours Total	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 1:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 2:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 3:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 4:	ml	ml	ml	ml

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	ml	ml	ml	ml
Day 11: 24 hours Total	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 1:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 2:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 3:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 4:	ml	ml	ml	ml
	ml	ml	ml	ml
Day 12: 24 hours Total	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 1:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 2:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 3:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 4:	ml	ml	ml	ml
	ml	ml	ml	ml
Day 13: 24 hours Total	ml	ml	ml	ml



Time 1:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 2:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 3:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 4:	ml	ml	ml	ml
	ml	ml	ml	ml
Day 14: 24 hours Total	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 1:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 2:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 3:	ml	ml	ml	ml
Time 4:	ml	ml	ml	ml
	ml	ml	ml	ml
Day 15: 24 hours Total	ml	ml	ml	ml

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