

Breast Reduction Post-Op Instructions

Overview:

You have had a breast reduction. Many patients find the operation to have pain over the first few days that improves slowly over 4 weeks. Fatigue is common and can be expected for up to 6 weeks.

After Surgery:

A bit of bleeding on the dressing is normal. Most swelling is resolved within 2 weeks. You may tire easily for the first few weeks after surgery. In order to protect incisions and promote healing, vigorous activity must be limited for four to six weeks after surgery. Avoid heavy lifting, stretching and strenuous exercise. You may need to prepare to have assistance with duties around the house (i.e. lifting children/groceries or vacuuming). Time off work varies between one and six weeks, depending on occupation. Nipples may be numb immediately after surgery and then may become more or less sensitive than preoperatively. Depending on the style of incisions, you may notice puckering at the suture lines. Occasionally the dissolving sutures form a little pimple in the skin and come out and can be treated by applying Polysporin and having your surgeon remove them. Puckering should resolve within three to four weeks. Approximately two weeks after surgery, when incisions have healed completely, scar management will be discussed, and an information sheet will be provided at your postoperative appointment.

Incision Care:

Purchase and bring with you a medium support bra with cup shape and without underwire or a loose sports bra with a front closure (if possible). You can contact One Bracing at RebalanceMD to purchase one. Wearing a shirt that opens in the front may be easiest. Choose a size that fits your pre-surgery chest measurement as the bra will also hold the dressings in place.

Starting the day after your surgery you will need to apply clean 4x4 gauze dressings to your incisions every day, for the first 10 to 14 days (i.e. after showering/bathing). This dressing will absorb small amounts of blood and/or clear fluid discharged from the incisions for the first few days. Replace wet/soiled gauze as needed (you may need to change the dressing a few times per day).

Small gaps/openings in the incision lines may occur; keep these areas clean and dry. The sutures are under the skin surface and will dissolve themselves. You may remove your dressings and shower three days after surgery. Steri-strips (thin tapes) or Prineo (a light purple colored mesh) will remain in place 2-3 weeks and are designed to get wet in the shower. You may use soap and water, rinse, and use a soft towel to pat dry.

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Activity and Care at Home:

The surgery will be performed under general anaesthetic therefore must not operate motor vehicles, boats, power tools or machinery for the first 24 hours. You may drive after three days or when you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication. Your bra should be worn both day and night, for the initial two weeks then be worn daytime only for the next three weeks. Supporting your breasts with the bra minimizes tenderness and scarring. After three months you may wear a bra with underwire (whenever comfortable). Generally, you may resume full activities at 4 weeks some people may require 6 weeks. Do not use your arms in a way that will engage your chest muscles too much, for three to six weeks, depending on comfort (i.e. pushing, pulling or reaching activities).

Pain Management:

Your breasts will be firm, swollen and bruised for several days. To manage pain, take Ibuprofen (Advil) and plain acetaminophen (Tylenol) every 6 hours for the first 48 hours. If that is not sufficient, then take the prescription medication. Do not take more Tylenol or ibuprofen than is recommended on the bottle in 24 hours. Sleeping with your arms elevated on pillows minimizes tugging on incisions and may, therefore, ease discomfort. Ice or cool compresses may help in the first couple of days, but do not leave ice on for longer than 10 minutes at a time.

IMPORTANT:

The surgery will be performed under general anaesthetic therefore must not operate motor vehicles, boats, power tools or machinery for the first 24 hours. You may drive after three days or when you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication.

If you experience increasing rather than decreasing pain, bleeding not controlled with pressure, excessive swelling or bruising that occurs only on one side, increased swelling or redness around the wound, increased drainage from incisions or in your drains, foul odour, fever, chills, please call your surgeon's office. If you experience shortness of breath, or arm or leg pain, call 9-1-1 or visit your emergency department.