



# Northwestern Specialists in Plastic Surgery

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*Dedicated to the highest level of personalized and compassionate care.*

## Post-operative Instructions

### Home Care Following Tissue Expander to Implant Exchange Surgery

#### Care of the Breasts

After surgery, you will be wrapped in an **ace wrap** to provide comfort and moderate compression. This is helpful for the first 24 hours after surgery. If you find it is too tight or too loose, you may adjust it. This garment can be removed for showering. After 24 hours, wear supportive garments for comfort. Avoid underwire bras until your follow up appointment.

If you had the position of your implants changed, continue to wear a supportive garment until your first post op appointment. This will reduce discomfort and movement of the implants.

You may remove the gauze **dressing** 24 hours after surgery and then shower. Keep the steri-strips in place; they have been applied with a skin adhesive, so you can wash over them without loosening them. Steri-strips will gradually loosen along the edges, and usually fall off within 7-10 days after surgery. If your steri-strips fall off earlier than 7 days after surgery, it is okay; if they are still in place after 10 days, you can remove them yourself or they will be removed in the office at your first post-operative appointment. You may continue to cover the incisions with gauze if you want to, but it is not necessary.

You may **shower** beginning 24-48 hours after surgery. Clean incisions gently with soap and water and pat dry. Do not swim, bathe, use hot tubs, or use lotions or creams on the breast for 2 weeks after surgery or until the incisions have healed.

Swelling & mild bruising of the breasts are normal after surgery and will gradually subside over the next several weeks. If you experience ever increasing swelling of one breast and worsening pain, please call the office.

#### Pain management

**Pain medication** prescribed post-operatively should be taken as directed to relieve pain as it is important to be comfortable enough to keep moving. This medication should be gradually tapered or reduced to a point at which narcotics (Norco, Tylenol with Codeine) are used only at night time. This usually occurs within 2-3 days of surgery. If you feel the medication prescribed is too strong, pain pills may be cut in half or try plain Tylenol (Acetaminophen) or Advil (Ibuprofen). If taking Acetaminophen, do not exceed 4,000 mg per day; please keep in mind that many narcotic pain medications prescribed also contain acetaminophen. We also recommend that you use a **stool softener** while taking pain medication as **constipation** after surgery and while taking narcotic pain medication is very common. If you are not getting adequate relief from the prescribed medication, please call the office.

If you had the position of your implants changed at all, you may notice increased pain along the lower or outer border of the implant. Dimpling in this area may also be noted and is normal. The pain and dimpling will resolve with time, but may require pain control for longer than 2-3 days.

### **Activity and Diet**

You may resume your normal diet.

You may resume normal daily **activities** the day after surgery. Walking is encouraged immediately after surgery and can help improve fatigue. **Exercise** that raises your heart rate and blood pressure should be avoided for 2 weeks post-operatively. You may resume aerobic exercise (bike riding, aerobics, etc) two to three weeks after surgery. Avoid chest specific exercises and running or jumping. All types of exercise are permitted after 6 weeks.

Do not **lift** anything that requires straining for two weeks. You may lift anything that does not require straining or struggling, but heavy lifting should be avoided for two weeks post-operatively.

Avoid sleeping on your stomach after surgery.

Average return to work time is around 2-3 days, depending on the level of activity required by your job.

You may resume **driving** when you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication during the day and you are able to sit comfortably behind the wheel and perform all motions necessary for safe driving. Always wear a seatbelt while in a car; use a pad or pillow on your chest if necessary for comfort.

**Call your doctor IF:** Fever of 101 or higher, severe pain that is not responding to pain medication, ever increasing swelling, spreading redness, or if the incisions open.