



Breast Reduction Post-Operative Care Guide

MORNING OF SURGERY

- Do not eat or drink anything at all for at least 6 hours prior to surgery.
- Do not wear contact lenses, wigs, hairpins, hairpieces or jewelry. Dress in old, loose, comfortable clothes. Wear slip-on shoes.
- Have someone drive you to your surgery and make certain someone will be available to take you home and stay with you for 24 hours. Put a pillow and blanket in the car for the trip home. A vehicle that allows you to recline is best.
- Do not smoke.

WHAT ARE MY POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS?

- Get plenty of rest and follow a balanced diet.
- Constipation is a side effect of decreased activity, use of pain medicines, and dehydration. Be sure to walk, drink fluids regularly, and consider adding raw fruit to your diet.
- Do not take Dispirin or any such products unless approved by your surgeon.
- Do not smoke or be around a smoker. This can be the most significant cause of serious healing issues.

WHAT SHOULD MY ACTIVITY LEVEL BE?

- Start walking the evening of surgery. This helps to reduce swelling, lower the chance of developing blood clots and/or pneumonia, and avoid constipation.
- Minimal activities for the first 4 days after surgery.
- Sleep on back for first 2 weeks.
- Do not raise arms above shoulders for first 4 days after surgery. Then, gradually increase arm activity.
- Do not drive until 2 weeks after surgery or you have full range of motion with your arms, and can stop the car or swerve in an emergency.
- Refrain from vigorous activity for 4-6 weeks. Increase activity gradually as tolerated. After 2 weeks you may perform light lower body exercise but must wait the full 6 weeks prior to performing upper body exercises.

- Avoid lifting anything over 5 kg for 4-6 weeks.
- Perform arm/shoulder range of motion exercises 4-6 times a day (as directed by your surgeon).
- For 4 weeks after surgery, please avoid physical work of any kind (house, yard, dishes, laundry), sports/working out (including treadmills), and soaking in tubs, pools, whirlpools.
- Employment activities can be resumed in 4-6 weeks (unless otherwise discussed with your surgeon).

HOW DO I TAKE CARE OF MY INCISION?

- You may shower 48 hours after removal of the drainage tubes, if any.
- Keep steri-strips on until they start to curl up on the ends, and then gently remove them.
- Keep incisions clean and inspect daily for signs of infection.
- No tub soaking of drain areas while drains are in place.
- Wear your surgical bra 24/7 as directed for 6 weeks post op. then you can stop wearing a bra while sleeping. No underwire bras for minimum of 8 weeks and possibly longer if area under fold is tender.
- You may pad the incisions with gauze for comfort.
- If your breast skin is dry after surgery, you can apply a moisturizer several times a day. Keep the suture area dry.

HOW SHOULD I EXPECT TO FEEL?

- Despite the sutures closing your incisions, there will be some oozing of tissue fluid from them for 2 days or so. This will soak up on the gauze and the bra to look like more than it really is. Report any significant drainage to the clinic.
- Most of the higher discomfort will subside after the first few days.
- You may experience temporary soreness, bruising, swelling and tightness in the breasts as well as discomfort in the incision area.
- You may ice your chest for the first week to decrease swelling and pain. Avoid heat to prevent a burn to the skin.
- You may not have normal sensation in the nipples. This may be more or less than usual, and usually returns over a couple of months.
- Your first menstruation following surgery may cause your breasts to swell and hurt.
- You may have random, shooting pains, tingling, or other strange sensations in the skin for a few months. These will subside.

WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE?

- Most of the discoloration and swelling will subside in 2-4 weeks.
- Your breasts will feel firm to the touch initially, but will soften with time.
- A more natural shape will occur as the breasts “settle” in a slightly lower position over the first few months. Final bra size can be determined within 10-12 weeks.
- Scars may be red and thick for 6 – 12 months (longer in lighter-skinned patients). In time, these usually soften and fade.
- Some asymmetry may persist, and is normal.

WHAT FOLLOW-UP CARE WILL I RECEIVE?

- Typically, you will have a post-op check by your surgeon at 1-2 weeks, and again in another month.
- Drainage tubes will be removed when the drainage is less than 50 ml per day. This usually happens in 1-3 weeks.
- Sutures are dissolvable. Any suture ends deliberately left out through the skin will be clipped on the first clinic appointment.

WHEN SHOULD I CALL MY DOCTOR?

- If you have increased swelling or bruising, particularly one side greater than the other.
- If swelling and redness persist for a few days.
- If you have increased redness along the incision.
- If you have severe or increased pain not relieved by medication.
- If you have any side effects to medications; such as, rash, nausea,
- If you have an oral temperature over 101°F.
- If you have any yellowish or greenish drainage from the incisions or notice a foul smell.
- If you have bleeding from the incisions that is difficult to control with light pressure.
- If you have loss of feeling or motion.
- Any other unanswered concern.