

**RICARDO A. MEADE. MD****Post-Operative Instructions Stage 1 Breast Reconstruction with Tissue Expanders****Instructions**

- Have someone drive you home after surgery and help you at home for a few days.
- Follow a balanced, LOW SODIUM diet. Decreased activity may promote constipation, so you may want to add more raw fruit to your diet. Over the counter stool softeners are recommended to help prevent constipation.
- Take pain medication and antibiotics as prescribed. Do not take aspirin or any products containing aspirin for 2 weeks following surgery.
- DO NOT SMOKE, as smoking delays wound healing and increases the risk of wound complications.

**Activities**

- Start walking as soon as possible, this helps to reduce swelling and lowers the chance of blood clots.
- Do not drive until you are no longer taking any pain medications (narcotics). Do not drive until you feel you have full range of motion with your arms.
- Refrain from vigorous activity for 4 weeks.
- Restrict excessive use of arms for at least 5-7 days.
- Refrains from physical contact with breasts for 3-4 weeks.
- Body contact sports should be avoided for 6-8 weeks.

**Drains**

- If you have drains, please refer to the handout "CARE OF YOUR JACKSON-PRATT DRAINS".
- **YOU MAY NOT SHOWER while your drains are in place.**
- Remember to call in your 24 hour drain total to the office (214-823-1691) every day.
- Your drains will be removed when the DAILY TOTAL amount is less than 25mL for 2 CONSECUTIVE DAYS.
- Keeping track of the drainage amounts, is important to your healing process. If incorrect drainage amount is recorded and the drains are removed too soon, THE RISK OF INFECTION AND FLUID BUILD UP INCREASES.

**Incision Care/Home Care**

- Dressings may be removed at home **48 hours after surgery.**
- Once dressings are removed (48 hours post-op) apply bacitracin (Neosporin) ointment twice a day for one week along the incision. You may purchase non-adherent dressings or gauze at a drug store to put on over the ointment.
- **IF YOU DO NOT HAVE DRAINS,** You may bathe 48 hours after surgery. Use a mild soap without heavy perfume such as baby shampoo. Let the warm soapy water run over the incisions. Do not scrub the incisions and pat the incisions dry, do not rub. **DO NOT SUBMERGE INCISIONS UNDER WATER.**
- If you were given a surgi-bra, you must wear it round-the clock or until otherwise instructed by Dr. Meade. (It is ok to remove the bra to shower.)
- Do not wear underwire bra.
- Refrain from sleeping on your stomach for 3 weeks. You may be more comfortable sleeping with your head elevated and a pillow under your knees, or in a reclining chair.

**Expansions**

- You will begin the expansions around 3-4 weeks after surgery once the drains have been removed and the skin appears to be healed.
- If you plan to undergo additional treatment after tissue expander placement, we will continue expansions through chemotherapy but not radiation therapy. FUTURE (Stage 2) surgeries take place after chemotherapy and radiation therapy are completed.
- The number of expansions depends on how much volume is added at the time of your initial reconstruction and how large you desire to be. In some cases, limitations due to skin may dictate your ability to continue with expansion, and we will discuss that as the process proceeds.
- At each expansion visit, the port will be located and saline will be injected into the expander with a small needle. **MOST COMMONLY, THE AREA IS NUMB AND YOU WILL NOT FEEL THE NEEDLE STICK.**
- You may feel a sensation of stretching or pressure after expansion, but this usually lasts only a few days. If you do have pain, over the counter pain medication such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil) can be used.

**What's Next?**

- Once you have finished your tissue expansion, the Stage 2 of breast reconstruction will be scheduled. This Stage 2 will be the discussed with Dr. Meade to discuss the best possible outcome/desire for each individual patient.

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- If you decide to have a nipple reconstruction, it is usually done during Stage 3, approximately 3-4 months after the permanent implant is placed.
- Tattooing can be done after nipple reconstruction surgery has healed, and is performed in the office.

**Follow-Up**

- MOST sutures are dissolvable. They are under your skin and released at the end of each incision. They are clear in appearance and will be trimmed to the skin line in 1-2 weeks.
- IF YOU HAVE VISIBLE black or brown-ish color sutures, please call the office to schedule suture removal with Dr. Meade's Nurse approximately 7-10 days after surgery to have them removed.
- **IMPORTANT**- Call the office (214-823-1691) for any increased redness, swelling, foul-smelling wound drainage, wound separation, severe/uncontrolled pain or temperate > 101.5. Do not hesitate to call for any other questions or concerns.

\*\*IF you have not already scheduled a post-op appointment, PLEASE call the office at 214-823-1691 to set up your appointment.

Patient \_\_\_\_\_ Nurse \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_