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Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery

Certified American Board of Plastic Surgery

TISSUE EXPANDER INSTRUCTIONS

Tissue expanders are one method of breast reconstruction that can yield satisfactory results; however, the reconstructed breast is firm and “perky”. The tissue expander is gradually inflated over several months during weekly or bi-weekly office visits until the desired volume is achieved. Most patients benefit from staged revisional surgery 6 months after placement of the tissue expander to improve shape and symmetry. Areolar tattoos are done as an office procedure approximately 6 weeks after breast revisions.

Smoking adversely affects all aspects of this surgery. Smoking is absolutely prohibited for 6 weeks prior to and after surgery. Even under the best of circumstances, the reconstruction may fail due to infection, wound healing problems, or other complications. In order to maximize your chances for a favorable result, please carefully review these instructions.

Your attention to these details is very important and will help assure the best possible result for you.

AFTER SURGERY

1. Keep the operation sites clean and dry for 24 hours. It is OK to loosen or adjust the ace wrap as needed for comfort. After 24 hours, please remove all dressings including the yellow xeroform gauze strips. It is OK to shower at that time. Expect some drainage on all dressings.

2. After showering, apply Neosporin ointment to all incisions and cover with clean dressings. You should hold the dressings in place with an athletic or jogging bra. The bras that hook or zip in the front are the most easy to use. Do not use tape or other adhesives on the breasts, as these will blister or tear the breast skin. If you prefer, you may continue to wear the ace wrap, but someone will have to assist you with this.
3. Change all dressings daily. Adjust the sports bra or ace wrap as needed for comfort. If you have a drain, please empty the reservoir twice daily and record the output. I will remove the drain when the output is less than 25 ccs in a 24 hour period. Please clean around the drain site where it enters the skin daily with alcohol. It is important to strip the drain tube to maintain patency twice daily.
4. Do not drive until Dr. Lindsey permits (you must be off all narcotic medication).
5. For the first 24 hours – Do not sign any legal documents or operate machinery. Have a responsible adult help you, and take it easy.
6. Clear liquids first. If no nausea, progress to a regular diet as tolerated.
7. Take medication as ordered. Do not take pain medication on an empty stomach. For patients with sensitive stomachs, the pain pills may be broken in half to reduce dosage. Over the counter medications are encouraged to further decrease narcotic usage.
8. Avoid alcoholic beverages. No smoking.
9. Resume any prior medication at home unless otherwise instructed by Dr. Lindsey.
10. Call Dr. Lindsey at (504) 885-4508 for: obvious bleeding, swelling or hardness of the breasts, fever over 101.5 degrees, redness, swelling or pus at the wound, persistent vomiting, any problems or questions.
11. Please schedule your appointment approximately one week following your surgery or when your drain is ready for removal.
12. No bending over or lifting for 2 weeks. No exercise or vigorous activities for 6 weeks. This includes activities that elevate your heart rate or cause you to perspire.