

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: BREAST SURGERY

IMPORTANT: Call Dr. Holzman immediately if you experience excessive bleeding, pain, or if you notice a sudden enlargement or swelling of the surgically treated areas.

FIRST 24 HOURS: Take your pain and nausea medications at regular intervals and begin advancing to a regular diet as tolerated. Keep the incision site clean and dry, and replace any wet gauze quickly.

DRESSINGS: Dr. Holzman will place you in either a bra or compressive tube top dressing after your breast surgery. These help avoid the use of tape. The compression bra acts as a dressing, and holds the breasts and implants in perfect position. At the first post-operative visit, which is usually on the second or third day after surgery, Dr. Holzman will remove the bra and dressings and check the breasts and incisions. Additional instructions will be provided at that time and are usually somewhat different for each patient. You will need to obtain a bra without underwire that will be worn after the first visit and for the next few weeks. Make sure to adjust for your new size. Dr. Holzman uses absorbable sutures that do not require removal; however, steri-strips will be placed over the wound and should be left intact. They are then usually removed after 7 days. There is no reason to disturb the dressings unless they become saturated, and then the soiled gauze may be replaced. You may apply ice to the chest if you desire for the first few days; however, many patients do not like the cold feeling.

You may take a sitz-bath immediately after surgery. You should take care to keep your dressings and incisions dry during this bath, and you should be very careful getting in and out of the tub. You may take a full shower 3 days after surgery. Carefully remove the compression bra before showering, and pat the incision areas dry after your shower before replacing the bra. You may place a 4x4 gauze pad (or a panty liner) in the bra if you notice any drainage from the incision site to keep the bra clean and dry.

ACTIVITY: Sleep on your back, slightly elevated for the first week after surgery. Refrain from aerobic exercise, housework, driving and lifting more than 10 pounds until you see Dr. Holzman for your first postoperative visit.

DRAIN CARE: If you had a drain, or drains inserted at the time of surgery, please make sure to document your drainage amount on the drain care sheet in your packet. The drain prevents

blood and fluid from accumulating in the surgical site. If you are going to take a shower with the drain, please do not let the drain dangle by the stitch that keeps them in position. It will be uncomfortable and they may pull out. Use a shoestring placed through the loop on the drain and drape it around your neck. Please make sure to bring your drain record to all of your appointments with Dr. Holzman.

HEALING: It is common for the two breasts to heal differently. One may have more swelling, one may seem more uncomfortable, and the shapes usually differ initially. With complete healing, they will look more similar and natural. In addition, regrowing sensory nerves to the skin that were cut with the surgical incision, may be accompanied by tingling, burning or shooting pain. This will disappear with time, and they are nothing to be alarmed about. You may hear or feel "sloshing" in your chest after surgery. This is not from the implant, but rather from air and fluid trapped in the pocket around the implant. Rest assured that your body will absorb it all within a few weeks.

The skin over your chest may appear shiny as a result of the swelling that occurs after surgery. The swelling will subside in a few weeks, and your skin will look more normal. If you had incisions around the areola, the nipples commonly become hypersensitive after surgery. This too will subside with time and is treated by gentle nipple massage for 1-2 minutes several times daily. Some patients experience itching along the incision lines. Please take Benadryl if this occurs so that you do not accidentally scratch your surgical site. You will notice moderate swelling and bruising after your surgery. This is normal and will resolve over the next 4-12 weeks. Be patient as your new and improved breasts settle in place. All new scars will appear red, pink or purplish. Scars on the breast may take a year or longer to fade. Avoid sun exposure to these areas.