

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: GYNECOMASTIA

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. If you feel nauseated, drink clear fluids and eat simple, easily digested foods like saltine crackers, applesauce or plain, steamed rice. Keep your garment on 24 hours a day. Make sure garment stays dry and correctly positioned. Replace any saturated gauze. No strenuous activity is allowed.

DRESSINGS: Dr. Holzman will place you in a compressive garment that contains foam pieces after your surgery. This helps avoid the use of tape. The compression garment holds the foam in position, which provides compression to the surgical site to stop oozing and prevent bruising. At the first post-operative visit, which is usually on the fourth or fifth day after surgery, Dr. Holzman will remove the dressing to check the incisions. He will remove the foam pieces from the garment at this time. After that, the garment should to be worn approximately 18 hours a day for the next 4 weeks. Additional instructions will be provided during this visit that will be tailored to your individual needs.

Dr. Holzman uses absorbable sutures that do not require removal; however, steri-strips will be placed over the wound and should be left intact. The strips are usually removed after 10 days. You may apply ice to the chest if you desire for the first few days as tolerated to decrease swelling.

You may take a sit-down bath immediately after your surgery, but the garment needs to remain dry and in place. You may shower after your first postoperative visit with Dr. Holzman. Before showering, carefully remove the garment. Pat the incision areas dry after your shower before replacing your garment. In addition, you may place some 4x4 gauze on the incision sites to absorb any drainage. Replace wet gauze as needed to keep the incisions and garment dry.

ACTIVITY: Sleep on your back with your head and chest slightly elevated for the first week after surgery. Refrain from aerobic exercise, driving and lifting more than 10 pounds until you see Dr. Holzman for your first postoperative visit. At your first postoperative visit, activity restrictions may be loosened depending on your individual progress. You may not drive while taking narcotic pain medications.

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, please do not let the drain dangle by the stitch that keeps it 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 2 sides of the chest to heal differently. One side may have more swelling, one side may seem more uncomfortable, and the shapes usually differ initially. With complete healing, the chest will look more symmetrical and natural. Some patients experience tingling, burning or shooting pain as the sensory nerves to the skin that were cut with the surgical incision regenerate. This will disappear with time and should not cause alarm. 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 can be treated with gentle nipple massage for 1-2 minutes several times per day. Some patients experience itching along their incision lines. Please take Benadryl if this occurs so that you do not accidentally disrupt your incisions by scratching. 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 chest recovers. All new scars will appear red, pink or purplish. Scars on the chest may take a year or longer to fade. Avoid sun exposure to these areas, and apply sunscreen frequently. Ask Dr. Holzman about medical grade scar reduction treatments. Healing requires rest and time, so take this opportunity to slow down and allow your body to recuperate.