

## **Breast reduction postop instructions**

### **In the Hospital:**

Immediately after your breast reduction surgery you will wake up in the recovery room and after about one hour you will be taken upstairs for your 24-hour hospital stay. You will have a moderate amount of soreness in your surgical sites and various types of pain medication are available for you in both the recovery room and on the floor. You will notice that you will have dressings on both your breasts and small tubes coming out attached to a small container; these are called drains. Once upstairs on the floor, The nurses will make you comfortable and make sure that your pain is controlled. If you have problems with feeling nauseated, medications are available for counter act that. You may take your regular medication that you normally take the following morning. During your hospital stay your surgical dressings will be changed and the nurses will apply clean, fresh, dressings. The nurses will teach you how to empty the reservoirs and teach you how to keep track of the volume that is removed. The fluid at first will be somewhat red and usually after a few days turn into a much clearer fluid. With your new clean dressings, you will be discharged somewhat by mid morning and you may go home. You should have a prescription for some pain medication to help you with the soreness at home. You can take 1 or 2 pain pills every 3 hours as needed. You should leave your dressings alone, until you come see us on your first postoperative visit. We do not like for you to shower at this point, but you may sit in the bathtub and fill this about half way up so your breast dressings remain dry, but you can wash your bottom in the bathtub. You are allowed to wash your hair, but try to keep your dressings clean. After you get home, please call our office and let us know how you are doing and arrange for a follow up visit usually 2-5 days after your operation.

### **Your First Postoperative Visit:**

During this visit, we will take your dressings off and leave the dressings off and at the same time remove the 2 drains. The drains leave a small hole at the end of the inferior incision and a small dressing will be placed over that. Expect a small amount of oozing from the drain holes for another 24-hours. At this point you will notice the rather bizarre shape of your breast and moderate amount of bruising evident through the skin. Do not be concerned about this, as the bruising will resolve very quickly and your breast will assume a very pleasant shape within a very short period of time. The breast tissue, immediately after breast reduction, surgery acts somewhat like silly putty and is rather amorphous at this point. We try to reshape your breast with the use of a postoperative bra. After your first visit, you may go out shopping for a bra. The most important aspect of buying this Platex "18-hour type" bra is that it gives good lateral and medial support. We would like for you to avoid wearing bras that push your breast flat against your chest, such as sports bras. Preferred type is full figure bra that gives good support from the sides and the medial side without squishing you flat. Feel free to ask the staff where to find these bras during the first postoperative visit. It is often a good idea to place thin panty liners or nursing pads on the inside of your bra to catch any of the little secretions that may come from the incisions.

You may note that on the lowest incision closure line (at the T-part) that the skin may have some drainage over at that area. This is often an area where there is some delay in healing and sometimes requires a little bit of care to nurse it back to health. We will examine this and discuss this with you during your first visit.

### **First 2 Weeks Follow Surgery:**

During this time, you should wear your postoperative bra 24-hours a day, but you can remove it to take a shower. All of the incisions can get wet, even though you still have sutures in place. Use soap and water to wash away any types of little clots and stained areas. At the end of 2 weeks, most of the bruising should be resolved and perhaps some the T area may have already started some healing.

### **Second postoperative visit:**

Approximately 10-14 days after your surgery we will see you back in our office for your second visit, at which time all of your sutures will be removed. This is not very painful and you do not need to take strong pain pills prior to coming. At this point, you may notice a significant improvement in the shape of your breast and a significant decrease in the amount of discomfort. If you are having some problems with the healing on the inferior T part, we will give you some instructions on how to take care of this small wound. It is often a good idea to place thin panty liners on the inside of your bra to catch any of the little secretions that may come from the incisions. This is a nice trick to keep your bra relative clean during this period of healing. We will see you at your 2-month anniversary of your surgery for the last time in our office. At this point, we will examine the shape of your breast and we will discuss any problems that you may still have at this point. At this point, you do not have to wear your "surgical bra"; you can go back to regular bra wearing. You are allowed to use an underwire in your bra if you so desire. At this point, you undoubtedly return to full activity and full sports activity and I am confident that you will truly enjoy your operation and your post surgical result at this point.

### **Matters of Concern:**

1. **Postoperative hematoma** (blood clot): This may occur in the first 2-3 days after surgery and may be evident already during your first dressing change in the hospital. The breast skin may be grossly distended and "rock hard" and very painful with blood collection that may occur on the inside of your surgery. Even though you may have a drain in place, a blood collection can still occur and this may require surgical treatment. If you feel that such a collection has occurred, please call our office as soon as possible.
2. **Postoperative infection:** If you notice an area of redness on your breast skin, which is spreading, along with swelling, pain and fever, you may have developed an infection. It is again of paramount importance that you will stay in touch with us regarding this as soon as possible, so we can start appropriate treatment with antibiotics and possible drainage.
3. **Wound breakdown:** You may develop an area of small wound breakdown right where the 2 lateral triangles come together on the inferior margin of your breast "the T-Section". We will discuss this with you during your postoperative visits and it usually requires no treatment or sometimes small dressing changes and allowing it to heal on its own. This is a common area of breakdown for breast reduction surgery and usually does not take away from the final results.

4. **Abnormal sensation and feeling:** Breast reduction surgery results in alteration in your nerve anatomy of your breast and you will have periods of increased itching, abnormal sensation, areas of numbness during your postoperative recovery. If this is bothering you, some medications are available to decrease many of these symptoms. Please give our office a call so we can be of assistance.

The timing of your return to work depends largely on your willingness to stay off from work and your postoperative stamina. We are very flexible with this. Some professionals return within days to their office, while other women who perform heavy duties, take a little longer to recuperate. You may return to driving at your best judgment, when you feel you have recovered sufficient strength and you are no longer under the influence of strong narcotics.

I hope that the above instructions will be helpful during your recovery. We are always looking forward to suggestions and improvements. Please let me know if any parts of your surgery did not go smoothly, or you would like anything improved, either for you or for future patients. It is only with your help that the operation continues to be improved for better results and more enjoyment for future patients. Most of all relax and enjoy your new figure, return to your regular activities as soon as you tolerate the discomfort. I wish you a speedy and happy recovery!

Sincerely,

Max L. Gouverne, M.D.  
MLG: mkf