

To My Patients after Breast Augmentation:

After a short period of time you will be ready to go home, and you need to bring a friend to drive you home. Make sure someone will stay with you overnight, and have help available for the first three days after surgery.

In the first 24 hours the most immediate concern is that of a possible blood clot around one of your implants. This will manifest itself as a very large, painful, swollen breast, which is becoming rock hard. There will be a significant difference with the opposite side, and this is not subtle at all. Please check the breast implants on a regular basis in the next 24 hours to see if this is occurring. This will occur in the first 24 hours, and subsequent to this period of time it is unlikely, although not impossible, for a blood clot to occur.

Activities: Take it easy and pamper yourself. Try to avoid any straining. You may go to the bathroom, sit and watch TV, but no matter how good you feel, please do not clean the house or re-arrange the attic, etc. We do not want you to bleed and cause any more swelling and bruising that is avoidable.

The first day will be quite uncomfortable. Please take your medications to help you with pain relief. Many patients have reported that wearing a heating blanket over their chest for the first few days gave them a nice amount of relief. You may want to try for yourself what works for you.

A small gauze dressing is placed over your incision and can be removed after 24 hours. You will notice that small “steri-strips,” which are small strips of glued on tape, are present immediately under your dressing. Please leave those alone. They will be removed approximately one to two weeks after your surgery. After 24 hours you are allowed to take a shower, and the stitches can get wet. You can use general cleansing soap, but avoid scrubbing the incision areas too vigorously, as this may disrupt the sutures. Definitely do not sit and soak in a bathtub or hot tub until well after the sutures have been removed.

Medications: Bring your medications with you on the day of surgery. At the time of discharge from the recovery room, you may start taking your pain medication and the anti-nausea suppository. Please make sure you have had your prescriptions filled prior to surgery, so the medication will be immediately available at home. The narcotic pain medication prescribed is Demerol mixed with an anti-nausea medication. You may take one to two pills every three hours as needed for pain. Try to slowly titrate your pain pills by initially taking a half tablet and then slowly increasing the amount of pain medication over 20 minutes. A large dose of narcotic on an empty stomach in a patient who is not used to taking narcotic pain medication will undoubtedly result in nausea and possibly vomiting. The wrenching of the vomiting will increase your pain, and you may throw up your pain medication, thereby not getting any relief. Please slowly titrate your pain medication. If you feel the slightest bit nauseated, please use the suppository to control your nausea. You may have been given a prescription for a sleeping tablet, which can be very helpful during the night and may assist you in sleeping through the night.

If you are unable to control your pain, or if the nausea or vomiting is uncontrollable, we may have to admit you to the hospital to give you intravenous medications and hydration in order to

control this problem. This, of course, involves extra expense but may be necessary if you are unable to hold any fluids down whatsoever.

When you get home, you may try to start taking small sips of water or juice, if you can tolerate it. If you are nauseated, please do not drink or eat any food, because you will undoubtedly throw this up. If you feel hungry, you can eat a small light meal, and probably the next day you can eat regular food.

Papaya and Bromelin tablets help to speed the resolution of bruising (these medications are available at health food stores).

Immediately after surgery the appearance of your breasts is quite different than what you may have expected. Typically the skin is severely stretched and pushes the implants flat against your chest wall and makes the implant feel unnatural. Sometimes the implants appear too superiorly placed, and most of the time the skin assumes a very strange, shiny appearance with the nipples typically edentulous and distended. Fortunately, these changes are all temporary. The excess fluid in your breasts will resolve, thereby making your nipples appear less distended. The skin on your chest will stretch over the next few weeks to few months, thereby relieving the tension placed on the implants, making the entire breast look much more rounded and soft.

After the first three days, the pain from the dissection is rapidly decreasing. You will notice that you are able to move your arms much more freely, with less pain. A small amount of bruising may appear in the tissues immediately surrounding your breasts, and this is not at all unusual. Also during this period you may notice that you are developing some soreness in your back, which is usually related to the changed posture you assume immediately after augmentation, especially during sleeping. Anti-inflammatory agent medication, such as Motrin, will help with the discomfort in your back, but usually this resolves over the next week or so, and the tissues begin to relax.

Your first follow-up visit, usually after one to three days, will confirm many of the above findings. At this point we will inspect your wounds for any problems, and we will also check you for positioning of the implants. Sometimes a small Ace wrap will be provided to help position the implants in the right position. During that time we will give you advice and counseling regarding the use of a bra. Please do not use a bra until we have had a chance to examine you. (This excludes perhaps a loose camisole type bra, which may be worn immediately post-op for pain relief.)

If an **infection** occurs, it will usually rear its head approximately three to seven days after your operation. This will usually manifest itself with huge swelling in one breast. The breast will also be very painful and fire engine red, and secretions may appear from the incision. If you feel this is occurring, please call our office at your earliest opportunity, so we can check for this complication. Excellent treatment is available if an infection occurs, but it does need to be treated aggressively and early.

During your second postoperative visit we will remove your sutures, typically between one to two weeks after your operation. About that time you may feel that the skin on your breast is raw, and the skin may start to flake. After you shower, please use a gentle body moisturizer to help improve the condition of your breast skin. After your sutures have been removed, you may start scar massage on the small incisions three days later. Please use vitamin E oil and massage the

incision twice a day with a small amount of oil. The oil can be removed immediately after the massaging. You can expect the incisions to improve after the first two weeks, and they will continue to improve for three to six months. Usually the results at six months are results that should be permanent.

After breast augmentation most patients resume work anywhere after three days to two weeks, depending on the type of work they perform. Most people take approximately one week off from their duties. You can function on the telephone and be busy from an administrative point of view after three days. You should refrain from heavy lifting and severe manual tasks for approximately four to six weeks post-op.

75% of the pain will have resolved after the first three days, but the remaining 25% may take up to six weeks to resolve. The inflammation will last approximately six weeks until it becomes stable. We encourage healthy activity immediately after surgery. You can resume aerobic exercising after one week. You may raise your arms as soon as you can tolerate it, and you may become active as soon as you can tolerate the pain.

The degree of pain for each patient is quite variable. While some have only the smallest amount of pain, which seemingly resolves over a matter of one week, others have pain and discomfort for four to six weeks. Fortunately neither is an indication of the ultimate outcome of the operation, and both are considered within the norm.

If you have any questions regarding your surgery, please don't hesitate to call, night or day, 993-2222.

Sincerely,

Max L. Gouverne, M.D.