

## **PRE AND POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SECOND STAGE BREAST RECONSTRUCTION**

### **BEFORE SURGERY**

- Please read all of the information in your pre-op packet three times, immediately after your appointment, the day before surgery, and again after surgery to ensure that you remember the details.
- By planning ahead, you can have a more relaxed recovery phase. Fill your prescriptions, stock the house with comfort foods, arrange a comfortable place to sleep and remember that you will need a ride to the first and second post-op appointment. Do not be alone the night of surgery; plan to have someone stay with you.
- **NO SMOKING** of any kind one month before or after surgery is recommended.

### **THE DAY OF SURGERY**

- Make sure you do not eat, drink, smoke or chew anything except essential medications (as approved by your surgeon) 8 hours prior to surgery. You may take a chewable Dramamine or with a small sip of water the morning of surgery.
- Know where to go, when to be there, and please **DO NOT FORGET** your pre-op packet
- Wear comfortable clothing, preferably something you do not have to pull over your head.
- You will be in the recovery room for about 2 or more hours after surgery, so be sure your ride home understands this time frame.
- The car ride home is usually not the highlight of your day. Sometimes the motion causes you to vomit. If you live hours away you may consider staying in town the first night.
- Once home, find a nice place to settle where you can sleep on your back with the head of the bed elevated about 30 degrees. Keep your medications, fluids and, if necessary, something to throw up into close by. Work on deep breathing to keep your lungs expanded. Start your antibiotics at the next mealtime once at home and all others as needed or as directed.

### **THE FIRST WEEK**

- You do not need to remove your bra or dressings unless there is problem or you have been given specific instructions. For most patients it is OK to shower in 24-48 hours as long as you do not have drains. Keep the white tape on your incisions and have the water hit your back. Put your surgery bra back on after the shower. Some people find it very comfortable to wear a T-shirt under your bra.
- It is fine to bathe all of the area outside of the bra. You may want to even have your hair washed and styled, but you should not do it yourself this first week since it entails over using your arms.
- If you have drains, record the 24 hour totals from each side and be sure to strip them regularly; at least 3 times per day. Do not shower if you have drains – you must wait until drains are out.
- It is common for one side to hurt more or to appear slightly more swollen when peering down the top of the bra. If the difference is extreme, you need to be examined to be sure you don't have a hematoma. A hematoma is usually very obvious, with one side markedly swollen, tight and bruised.
- Low-grade temperatures (99-101°) are usually from not breathing deeply enough. Be sure you take 10 deep breaths an hour and get out of bed regularly. Your temperature should become normal. With continued or higher fevers, other things to check are for redness at your I.V. site, burning when you urinate and tenderness in your calves. Bad signs are increasing pain and redness, higher temperatures, rash, fainting, dizziness, persistent vomiting or diarrhea. Let us know immediately if you experience any of these symptoms.
- When you come back for your first follow-up appointment we switch you to a more comfortable bra. We recommend a soft bra style with no underwire or lace. You will wear this bra around the clock for the next 3-6 weeks. Pick your closest guess on sizes and leave the tags on so you can return it if it is the wrong size. Going up a band size for the first few weeks may be more comfortable.

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- Everyone experiences pain differently. Some people feel fine right after surgery, while others are sore for up to 6 weeks. You should NOT drive for the first week, or while you are still on pain medication or muscle relaxants. Most people are still sore enough the second week that their reaction time behind the wheel of a car is still slow. Unless you feel completely normal, do not drive the second week either.
- Even though you may be feeling well, you still need to be very careful not to exert yourself and over-use your arms. Do not pick up anything heavier than a phone book or engage in activities that make your face turn red for the first four weeks. Try and keep your upper arms within 6 inches of your body for the first 2 weeks.
- Be sure to get your implant information and keep it in a safe place.
- Be sure to get information regarding your implant warranty information. Extended warranty paperwork must be submitted to the manufacturer within 30 days of your surgery (with Mentor implants you can get the paperwork at [www.mentorcorp.com](http://www.mentorcorp.com)).

### **THE SECOND WEEK**

- Wear the bra at all times and continue following arm movement and sleep precautions as described in week one.
- We will change the white tape over your incisions. Once healed, you can start scar care.
- You can shower after your drains come out (if you have drains). Allow water to fall on your back and shoulders rather than directly on your chest.
- You should also start breast massage this week as tolerated, do NOT massage if you have textured implants. The goal of massage is to keep the scar capsule and space around the implant larger than the implant itself for a softer and more natural result. It can also be used to move the implant into a more desirable location (for example if one is slightly high). The direction is usually up and in for most patients, but your specific instructions will be given to you at your appointment.
- You should have another appointment during this or the next week to be sure you are doing things well. We will also check on your healing.

### **THE THIRD AND FOURTH WEEKS**

- You should be feeling better, but still be good and keep those arms down.
- Massaging should increase to three or four times per day for at least one to two minutes each session. Longer massage sessions are also fine. This should become second nature and should be done daily to help keep your implants soft.
- You may feel a sharp bump along your incision or get an irritated pimple that is likely a “spitting” suture, or one that is coming up to the surface. Keep it clean and make an appointment to have it removed. You can dress it with bacitracin and a dry gauze until you get into the office.

### **LONG TERM**

- The standard follow-up schedule is as follows: appointment in 3-5 days, then at two weeks, one month and one year. More appointments can be made as needed or as recommended.
- Be sure you have our implant information for your records and be sure you understand manufacturer’s warranty information. (With Mentor implants you can send in for an extended warranty @ [www.mentorcorp.com](http://www.mentorcorp.com))
- Be sure to tell future mammography technicians that you have implants.
- Some procedures, such as dental work, spread bacteria in the bloodstream and we recommend that you take antibiotics before the procedure to prevent bacteria spreading to your implants. You can tell your dentist that the standard prophylaxis that they use is fine. If you do not want to tell them you have implants you can call us. It is probably best not to schedule dental work for a few months after your breast surgery. You want to

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take an antibiotic for the first year after implants and if you have had radiation indefinitely before any dental work.