

## Post-Operative Instructions for Exchange of Breast Tissue Expander to Breast Implant

The following instructions are general guidelines to promote a safe and uneventful recovery from your surgery.

### Activity Limitations:

- No lifting over 10 pounds for the next 2 weeks.
- Do not take Aspirin, Motrin, Aleve or Ibuprofen or other blood thinning agents until you are instructed it is safe by University of Virginia Plastic Surgery.
- No sports activity or heavy lifting/heavy physical activity for 3-4 weeks or longer if instructed by University of Virginia Plastic Surgery.
- Avoid excessive arm movement including repetitive overhead activities. We do want you to work on slow controlled stretching to your side and above your head the day following your procedure and following days.
- Avoid driving until you are no longer taking pain medications. This is typically for 5 to 7 days after your surgery or as specified by University of Virginia Plastic Surgery.

### Bathing and Incision Care:

- You may remove your operative bra and bandages 48 hours after the procedure, **but leave your surgical skin tapes in place.** You may trim the edges as they peel back.
- You may shower after you remove your dressings and then dab (do not rub) your breasts dry.
- After showering replace your surgical bra and wear day and night for 2 weeks or as specified by University of Virginia Plastic Surgery.
- If a drain is necessary; record the output from your drains on the sheet given to you.
  - Drain Care:
    - 1) Clean drain holes daily and apply bacitracin ointment.
    - 2) Keep drain pinned to binder to prevent pulling on them.
    - 3) University of Virginia Plastic Surgery's RN will typically remove the drain when the fluid collection is less than 30 mL over 24 hours this typically within a week of surgery.
- Keep drains pinned to clothing to prevent pulling on them.

### Pain/ Medications:

- You will feel discomfort and pain for a few days following your surgery.
- This can be controlled with pain medications prescribed by University of Virginia Plastic Surgery. Most patients take narcotics for a few days after surgery and then may switch to Tylenol as needed.
- Apply ice packs to the operative area every hour, 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off for 24-48 hours after your procedure.
- Prescription pain medication may be constipating. To help avoid constipation increase your intake of fluids and fibers. You may use stool softeners as necessary. Any Senna derivative such as Senokot should help.
- Not all patients receive antibiotics after surgery. Typically these are prescribed for patients who have had radiation, have had chemotherapy or other reasons for not having normal immune system.

### General Recommendations:

- After your procedure it is common to have swelling and bruising and some difference between the breast that was operated on and the opposite side and both sides if both were part of your procedure. Over time much of this improves
- Occasionally a suture might be felt from part of your incision. This is not an emergency and will either absorb or can be removed at your normal clinic appointment.

### Notify your physician or After Hours Advice for any of the following:

- Any signs of infection; fever (greater than 101° F), significant redness around incisions or on the breast.
- Fluid in the drain tube that is thick, white or yellow, or foul smelling.
- Breast that is hot to the touch.
- One breast becomes significantly larger, more swollen or significantly more painful than the other

For life threatening issues or concerns dial 911.