

University of Virginia Plastic Surgery Post-Operative Instructions for Breast Reconstruction Tissue Expander or Immediate 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.
- 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.
- Most people return to sedentary workplace after two weeks but may be 4-6 weeks for more vigorous work environment
- University of Virginia Plastic Surgery wants you to walk around the house the day after your surgery or after your discharge from the hospital at least several times daily. Do NOT STAY IN BED ALL DAY!

Bathing and Incision Care:

- You may remove your ace wrap or 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 48 hours unless told otherwise by University of Virginia Plastic Surgery after you remove your dressings and then dab (do not rub) your breasts dry.
- After showering replace your ACE wrap or operative 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 gently with soap and water.
- 2) Keep drain pinned to binder to prevent pulling on them.
- 3) University of Virginia Plastic Surgery's RN or resident 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. **Pain/ Medications:**

- You will feel moderate discomfort and pain for a few days following your surgery.
- This can be controlled with pain medications prescribed by University of Virginia Plastic Surgery.
- 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. Complete all antibiotic medication that is prescribed by University of Virginia Plastic Surgery UNTIL GONE.

General Recommendations:

- Expect variable breast shape changes including decreased size, less protrusion and potentially more droopiness as well as early differences one side compared to other side. The amount of change depends on the size of your implants and the size of your breasts as well how elastic your skin is.
- University of Virginia Plastic Surgery will discuss some early slow controlled arm stretching exercises such as "wall walking with your arms" during early recovery

Postoperative Appointment Information:

- If your first postoperative appointment was not made at the time of your preoperative appointment University of Virginia Plastic Surgery would typically like to see you back for your first postoperative visit one to two weeks after your surgery. This date will be given to you before your discharge from the recovery room. If an appointment is not made at your preoperative appointment or in the recovery room, please call the office the day after your surgery to schedule that 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.