

Post-op Instructions

While you are still in the hospital or outpatient facility:

1. Following your surgery, you will be encouraged to drink clear liquids after you are fully awake. Your diet will be advanced as tolerated.
2. You will be given wound care instructions and also drain care instructions if this applies to you.
3. A prescription for pain medication will be written for you if your medications have not already been sent to your pharmacy prior to surgery.

Upon you arrival at home:

Regarding wound dressings and wound drains: If you have had plastic surgery reconstruction, please refer to that office regarding your dressing and drain care instructions.

1. Twenty-four hours after you arrive home, you may carefully take off your dressing. You may notice small tape-like strips along your incision. These are referred to as “steri-strips.” These strips should be left in place for as long as they are adhered on their own. They will begin to fall off on their own, this may take 7-10 days or longer. You should call the office if your skin becomes blistered or irritated.
2. After your dressing has been removed, you may shower. You should keep your incision clean, but do not scrub the area. Blot dry with a towel. You may reapply a light dressing if needed for drainage until the incision is dry, then leave the incision open to air.
3. If you have had a sentinel node excision or an axillary node dissection, you may have an incision in one or both of your axillary areas (underarm region). You should keep the area clean and dry, and avoid perfumes, powder, or deodorant until the incisions are well-healed. You should be aware that with a sentinel node excision or an axillary node dissection, blue dye may be used. This may cause urine and/or bowel movements to have a blue tint for a few days following your surgery. You should not be concerned as this will clear in a few days. The skin may remain blue for weeks to months, but usually improves with time.
4. You may notice that your stitches are not visible. They have been placed under your skin and will dissolve on their own. If you have a drain, you will notice a stitch that helps to anchor the drain tubing.
5. Patients who have had open surgery or a mastectomy on one side should wear a bra for support *as comfort allows*. This will decrease tension on your incision site and offer support if you have had open surgery or a lumpectomy. If you have had a mastectomy, it will support the other breast and may help secure your dressing on the surgical site. Patients who have had a mastectomy on both sides can avoid the use of a bra for the first six to eight weeks. At that time, mastectomy patients can be fitted for a mastectomy bra and prosthesis.
6. Some patients have drains to care for after surgery. You may find it helpful to secure the drain or drains to a ribbon or shoelace worn loosely around your neck while showering. Securing the drain to your clothing with a safety pin is also helpful, however, make sure the drain bulb is below the area where the drain enters the skin. A light dressing may be placed after surgery if desired for comfort or drainage. A small amount of redness around the drain site is normal, but if the redness increases or you have pus-like drainage, you should call your surgeon’s office. Your drain should be emptied and recorded daily. Please see the *Drain Care Instructions* sheet.

Please call your surgeons office to schedule a post-operative appointment for 7-10 days after your surgery, if one has not already been scheduled for you.

Also, call your surgeon immediately if you experience any of the following symptoms:

1. A fever of 101 degrees or higher
2. Increased pain, warmth, drainage, or redness at the incision site
3. A cough or shortness of breath, or pain in the chest or calf
4. Bleeding that soaks through the dressing or causes swelling
5. Decreased drain output of 30cc or less for two consecutive 24-hour periods in a row.