

TISSUE EXPANDER INSERTION: FIRST STAGE BREAST RECONSTRUCTION

BEFORE SURGERY

Visit your family doctor, and discuss any medications that you are currently taking, including Vitamins. Some medications increase bleeding and should be avoided for at least ten days before surgery (i.e. Aspirin, Coumadin, Plavix, apixaban, Ginger or Gingko supplements).

You may tire easily for the first few weeks after surgery and will therefore need plenty of rest. In order to protect incisions and promote healing, vigorous activity must be limited for four to six weeks after surgery. Avoid heavy lifting, stretching and strenuous exercise. You may need to prepare to have assistance with duties around the house (i.e. lifting children/groceries/vacuuming). Time off work varies between one and six weeks, depending on occupation.

DAY OF SURGERY

For your general anesthetic, it is very important that you have nothing to eat or drink after midnight the night before surgery. Shower/bath prior to leaving for the hospital.

Wearing a shirt that opens in the front may be easiest to put on/take off.

AFTER SURGERY

You will be discharged from hospital the day after the surgery. You may remove the

outer dressing and sponge bath with the underlying Steri-Strip tapes **on** for three days after surgery. Avoid raising your arms to wash your hair for 1 week. Use a soft towel to pat dry. Once the drains are removed, you may shower with soap and water daily, rinse, pat dry. Avoid bathing the incisions. A loose-fitting sports bra may be worn starting two weeks after the surgery. The sutures are under the skin surface and will dissolve. Steri- Strips should be left in place for as long as possible. If they fall off within the first seven days, replace them with 3M Micropore tape (available at most pharmacies).

You may notice puckering at the suture lines. This should resolve within three to four weeks during the expansion process and later with massage.

EXPANSION PROCESS

Your first expansion visit will be scheduled for 1-2 weeks after the surgery, depending on how healthy the breast skin appears after the mastectomy. Take tylenol & ibuprofen one hour before your office expansion visits. The duration of your expansion process depends on:

1. amount filled during surgery
2. amount of tolerated fill at expansion visits
3. ultimate size goals

When your tissue expander is full you will be booked in to see Dr. Robinson to discuss with you the next surgery involving removal of the tissue expander and placement of your permanent implant.

IMPORTANT!

If any of the following occur please notify Dr. Robinson:

- fever and chills
- increasing rather than decreasing pain
- redness extending around the wound, especially if only on one side
- EXCESSIVE bleeding, swelling, or bruising

A postoperative appointment should be scheduled in 1 week with nurse Tane. Please arrange this with Dr. Robinson's office.

PAIN

—the tissue expander is paced below the pectoralis major muscle causing pain once placed. Ibuprofen (Advil) and acetaminophen (Tylenol) together can provide relief.

—sleeping with your arms elevated on pillows can also ease discomfort.