

# Postoperative Instructions: Breast Augmentation

## Immediately After Surgery:

- You will be in hospital overnight.
- You will have a drain coming from each breast which removes any old blood or extra fluid from the operative sites. These drains will be reviewed by your surgeon next morning prior to removal.
- Prior to discharge, you will need to have tolerated a meal, have minimal nausea, and emptied your bladder. Your discomfort should also be manageable by oral tablets alone without injections.
- You will be discharged from hospital with pain killers and a course of antibiotics.

## Pain Medication:

- Take 2x paracetamol tablets (Panamax or Panadol) every 6 hours for the first 5 days.
- Take ibuprofen (Nurofen or Brufen) 400 mg with breakfast, lunch and dinner as required. Do not take ibuprofen on an empty stomach. Do not take ibuprofen if you have asthma, or known allergic reactions to non-steroidal anti-inflammatories such as Aspirin, Naproxen, Naprosyn or Feldene.
- Strong painkillers such as Tramadol, Oxycodone (Endone) or Palexia will be prescribed for you. Take them as instructed if you have severe pain.
- If your pain is severe and not relieved by the strong painkillers, please call us.

## Hygiene:

If you have been sent home with your dressings intact with foam tape:

- DO NOT get your dressings wet. Do NOT have a shower; sponging and towelling around your dressings should be adequate. If you have a hand-held shower head, showering the lower half of your body is okay.
- If you would like to wash your hair, do it with your head tipped back at the basin with help (going to the hairdresser is a very good option).
- If the corners of the tapes are starting to lift – trim it back so the corners sit flat on your skin.
- If your dressings are falling off, or becoming excessively itchy – contact the office for an earlier appointment with our nurses.
- Your first postoperative appointment will be around 4-5 days. At this appointment, dressings will be removed. BRING YOUR BRA with you to this appointment, so that our nurses can fit you into the bra.

After your dressings have been removed:

- Shower daily over your transparent surgical tapes and pat dry
- Use a hairdryer on a cool setting to dry stubborn areas such as areas under your arms or under your breasts.
- Wear your garment bra AT ALL TIMES (24/7) between showers.

## Sleeping:

You can sleep in whichever position that you are comfortable in, however, most patients find it uncomfortable to lie on their sides for at least 2-3 weeks. It can take up to 3 months before you will be able to lie on your stomach. To ensure a good night sleep, make sure you take your pain medications prior to sleeping. It is not unusual to be particularly sleepy and tired for 1-2 weeks after an operation or an anaesthetic. Rest is very important after breast surgery, so take time to rest as needed.

**Diet:**

Recovering from anaesthesia is like recovering from the flu. Start with clear liquids; then advance to soft, non-spicy foods over the next 2 days. Nausea and vomiting is not uncommon after surgery, the most important thing to do is drink plenty of fluids to keep your body hydrated. This will pass once the anaesthetic has been eliminated from your system. If you have any persistent nausea and vomiting over 48 hours after surgery, please contact the rooms.

It is also recommended to have lots of fibre in your diet, or take a fibre supplement to help with your bowel motions. Constipation is very common after procedures due to a combination of anaesthetic drugs and pain-killer medications.

**Activity:**

- You should rest as much as possible for the first 24 hours.
- Small, short walks around the ward or the house are encouraged to prevent clots in the legs.
- You can move your arms, neck and torso in all directions – it won't tear anything out as long as the movements are within your comfortable range, gentle and controlled. Be gentle with lifting your arms above your head within the first 2 weeks.
- Avoid bending over, lifting (anything over 500g), pushing, pulling, reaching, stretching or straining for at least 6 weeks (this includes housework, cooking, cleaning, hanging out laundry, lifting children, going out shopping or do the groceries etc). You will notice swelling and increased pain in your breast if you have done too much.
- No driving for two weeks. After two weeks, you should be able to drive when you can turn and look over your shoulder comfortably - so that you can change lanes safely
- The post operative period can be an emotional time, feeling teary is normal and will pass.
- Gentle walking without too much arm movement is good exercise after the 2<sup>nd</sup> week. Try to keep it to a maximum of 20 minutes. Avoid getting hot and sweaty or you could cause a wound infection. Activities can be increased after the 4<sup>th</sup> week, build up slowly week by week.
- You may be able to start exercising at 25% of your normal level after 6 weeks, graduate your level progressively until week 8. Wear a supportive bra (with no wires) during your exercises for the first 3 months.
- Most patients with desk jobs can return to work after 2-3 weeks, but those with more manual jobs (especially repetitive arm movements) need a minimum of 4-6 weeks off work.

**Wound and Scar Management:**

- The nurses will see you at 4-5 days after your surgery to remove your foam and fit your bra (Your bra will be inside your postop pack, please bring this with you to your appointment).
- Your tapes can be showered and pat dry. You can also use a hair dryer on the cold setting to dry stubborn areas (e.g. under the breast). The white Fioxmull/Hypafix tape placed on over your scar will need to be changed weekly for 4 weeks.
- If you notice any oozing or breakdown of your scars while changing your tape, please contact the rooms.
- You can start massaging along the scar at three weeks if the scar lines are intact. Use your fingers or thumb, press firmly and massage in a rotating motion along the scar. It should only take approximately 5 minutes, using both hands on both breasts. Regular massage at least 5 times a day is recommended for 3 months.
- Breast massage should start two weeks after surgery. Using the palms of your hand, firmly sweep and push your breast inwards twice, downwards twice and upwards once. Then use the

palm of your hand and massage all four quadrants of your breast, in a firm rotator movement. Repeat this cycle for five minutes and for five times during the day. This need to be continued for 3 months.

- Implant massage should be continued for your lifetime, the recommendation after the first 3 months is to massage it at least once a day.
- If you find that your scar is still quite lumpy and red at 8 weeks (when taping has finished), it may be worth investing in a roll of silicone tape 'Siltape'® (available from our office if you can't get it at your local pharmacy). After shower each day, apply the tape over your scar and wear for at least 16 hours a day. The tape can be reused until it loses its adhesiveness (usually a week). Continue with massage over the applied tape. This is effective on modifying scars if used up to 6 months after surgery.
- Please do not hesitate to contact the rooms and make an appointment if you have any concerns about your scars or your breasts at any stage.

### **Temperature:**

A low-grade fever up to 37.5 degrees Celsius for 1-2 days is normal. Call the office if:

- Your temperature is 38 degrees Celsius or over.
- You feel feverish, chills, or unwell

### **Swelling:**

Swelling reaches its peak at day 3-4 after surgery. Some patients have swelling and bruising that tracks all the way down into the upper abdomen and under the armpits. Bruising can be a range of colours from dark purple, green to yellow. Give your body at least 2 weeks for the bruises to start fading and 3 months for the swelling to disappear. The shape, size and appearance of your breast can take up to 6 months to settle. The implants often take up to 12 months to fully settle into their position and soften.

### **Clothing & Bras:**

- You need to wear a supportive bra for 3 months. This does not necessary have to be the bra we provided – as long as there is no wire and the bra is soft and non-irritating to the scars.
- DO NOT wear an underwire bra for at least 3 months (the wires will change the shape of your breast and also irritate the scar, encouraging prominent scar formation).
- You can wear a similar styled supportive crop while your provided bra is in the wash. You can also contact our office if you wish to purchase an extra bra.
- Delay bra and clothes shopping for at least 3 months. Your body shape and size will continue to change until the swelling in your breast has settled.

### **Follow-up:**

- Your first follow-up is usually with our nurses at 4-6 days after surgery for wound check and dressing change. Make sure you call the office to establish date and time if you have not already received your first post-operative appointment on discharge from the hospital.
- Your second appointment is around 2-3 weeks after surgery where your wounds will be checked again and your breast swelling will be assessed. You will also be advised in regards to breast and scar massage by our nursing staff.
- Your surgeon will see you around 8-12 weeks and check your progress and scars. Further advice in regards to breast care, breast screening and scar management will be discussed with you during this consultation.
- Additional appointments after this will be made if necessary.

- You are encouraged to contact rooms at any stage if you have any concerns prior to your next appointment.
- It is important that your implants are checked with physical examination for hardening (capsular contracture) and/or movement (displacement) once a year. It is also recommended that you have 2-yearly ultrasounds to check the integrity of your implants. This is in conjunction with your mammograms if you have reached the age of regular breast screening.

### **Your Implants:**

- In your postop pack, there will be a card with details of your implants. Please keep this in a safe place.
- To activate your implant warranty, you will need to register your implants online within 30 days of your surgery. Instructions are also inside your postop pack.
- Your surgeon will register your implants with the Australian Breast Device Registry at the Monash University in Melbourne. This is a central national database independent of the surgeon and the implant manufacturers, with the main purpose of monitoring outcomes and safety of implants. To find out more about the registry, visit [www.abdr.org.au](http://www.abdr.org.au)

### **What to Expect after a Breast Augmentation:**

- While your breasts are swollen in the first few weeks, they may appear to be very big and high on your chest wall. Allow at least 3-6 months for the shape and size to settle.
- The skin around the operative site may be irritated and sensitive after surgery. You should avoid the sun, and use a gentle cleanser and moisturiser.
- Your breast and nipples may feel numb after surgery, this is quite normal.
- When some of the skin nerves recover after surgery, you may experience tingling, buzzing, or electric shock sensation periodically in the breast. This is expected, and will disappear after a few months.
- Use gentle massage, with different textures and patterns, over the skin to “redirect” nerves and settle these sensations
- The breast may feel very firm in the first few weeks. The breast massage will help with softening of the breast tissue around the implant. This can take up to three months to improve, and 12 months to completely soften.
- Sometimes, the skin will appear irregular, puckered and pleated around the suture lines. All this will take time to smooth out as the scar relaxes and the deep sutures dissolve. Again, massaging of the scar is important to help these settle.
- Some asymmetry of the breast and nipple is normal and should be expected from your surgery. Most people have minor asymmetry naturally before surgery. Breast Augmentation surgery will not correct pre-existing asymmetry of the breasts and nipples, sometimes it may accentuate it due to the swelling.
- It is essential that you contact the rooms (and not your GP!) at any stage if you have questions or concerns. We need to be fully aware of any problems you may be having, and our nurses are experienced in postoperative care; they are more than happy to help with any queries or concerns you may have, and will be able to organise an appropriate timely appointment for you if required.

### **Please Contact Us if:**

- You develop a fever or become unwell.
- Your nausea and vomiting persists after 48 hours.
- You develop spreading redness/rash over the operative area or suture lines.

- You feel fluid build up in your breasts or sudden swelling in the breast.
- You have pain which is not relieved or controlled by your pain-killers.
- You have sudden copious discharge of fluid or oozing from your wounds.

### **Your Medications:**

- **Antibiotics:** Please start your antibiotics as soon as possible after your procedure. Follow the instruction on the box as dispensed by the pharmacist. Please complete the course.
- If you have any vomiting or diarrhoea associated with either the antibiotics or pain-killers, please cease them immediately.
- **Blood Thinners:** If you have stopped your blood thinners before surgery, you can restart it the day after your procedure. Please take your usual dose at your usual times, unless otherwise instructed.
- **Diabetic Medication:** If you have stopped or adjusted your diabetic medications prior to surgery because you were fasting, you can restart it as soon as you have started eating and drinking normally again. Please take your usual dose at your usual times. Please do not restart it if you are vomiting.

### **Your Postoperative Appointment:**

Your follow-up appointment will be with our practice nurse in the dressing clinic

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ at

- Sunnybank Australis Specialist Centre Clinic
- Everton Park Clinic

### **Contact Telephone Numbers:**

During Office Hours and Non-Urgent Matters – 3353 6165

After hours and for Emergencies – please contact the hospital where you were discharged from.