



Post-Operative Instructions for DIEP Flap Breast Reconstruction

Immediate Post-Operative Care

1. Hospital Stay:

- a. Expect to stay in the hospital for 3-5 days for monitoring and recovery.
- b. Nurses will check blood flow to the flap frequently to ensure proper healing.

2. Pain Management:

- a. Pain is managed with prescribed medications; take them as directed.
- b. You will also need to take a baby aspirin (81 mg) for 30 days

3. Drain Care:

- a. You may have surgical drains in the chest and/or abdomen.
- b. Follow the drain care instructions for emptying and recording drainage.

4. Incision and Wound Care:

- a. You may begin showering after 48 hours. Please cleanse incisions with soap and water and pat dry
- b. Avoid submerging in water (baths, swimming pools) until cleared by your surgeon.
- c. Watch for signs of infection (redness, swelling, warmth, or discharge).

Activity Restrictions

1. Movement and Positioning:

- a. Sleep with your upper body slightly elevated and knees bent to reduce tension on incisions.
- b. You may sleep on your sides and back only. Do not lie on your stomach
- c. Use a walker or take short walks to prevent blood clots but avoid overexertion.

2. Lifting and Exercise:



- a. Avoid heavy lifting (over 5-10 lbs) for at least 4 weeks.
- b. Avoid strenuous activities and high-impact exercises until cleared by your surgeon.
- c. It is critically important to walk at least three times daily to help promote blood circulation.

3. Driving:

- a. Do not drive while on prescription pain medication.
- b. Ensure you have full range of motion before resuming driving.

Signs of Complications

Call your surgeon immediately if you experience:

- **Infection:** Fever over 101.°F, excessive redness, swelling, or drainage from the incision.
- **Blood Clots:** Pain, swelling, or redness in the legs.
- **Flap Compromise:** Changes in breast color (darkening, blanching, or increased swelling).
- **Hematoma or Seroma:** Excessive bruising or fluid buildup.

Scar and Long-Term Care

1. Scar Management:

- a. Once healed, we recommend silicone scar sheeting to be placed on all incisions
- b. Avoid direct sun exposure to incisions for at least 6 months.

2. Follow-Up Appointments:

- a. You will be seen at 1 week after discharge
- b. Please notify us of any concerns between visits.

3. Maintaining Results:



- a. Maintain a healthy lifestyle to support healing and long-term outcomes.
- b. Monitor your breasts and abdominal area for any changes.

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