

What You Need to Do Before and After Your Breast Surgery

Instructions Before Surgery

You are scheduled for surgery on _____ at _____.

Please **report to** the Center for Perioperative Care, on the 3rd floor of the Wang Ambulatory Care Center at Massachusetts General Hospital on: _____ at _____.

Please **report to** Nuclear Medicine, located on the 2nd floor of the White Building at Massachusetts General Hospital on: _____ at _____.

Medication instructions

Please tell your surgeon's office about any blood thinning medications you take, such as Coumadin® (warfarin) or Plavix® (clopidogrel) **as soon as possible**. You should talk with your surgeon about **all** prescribed and over-the-counter medications or supplements you take.

Tylenol® is okay to take before surgery.

Hibiclens: Your surgeon may want you to wash with an antimicrobial soap called Hibiclens. You will be given a separate sheet with instructions on how to use Hibiclens.

Day of surgery instructions

- Do not eat or drink after 10pm the night before your surgery.
- If you have to drink the morning of your surgery, you may have 8 ounces or less of water. Do not drink any water for 4 hours before surgery.
- Do not chew gum, take cough drops, or eat hard candy the morning of surgery.
- Do not wear any jewelry. Remove body piercings.
- Remove nail polish from your index fingers.
- Leave all valuables at home.
- You will need an adult to drive you home after surgery.

Please contact your Primary Care physician for insurance referrals.

If you have any questions, call our surgical scheduler at 617-726-9200.



Instructions After Surgery

- You may take a shower the day after your surgery.
- You will have a dressing (bandage) over your incision(s). Please remove the dressing 48 hours after surgery. Although some drainage on the dressing is normal and expected, please call if the dressing is soaked with drainage.
- Under the dressing you will see thin tapes called steri-strips over your incision(s). These can get wet in the shower, but do not scrub them. Pat them dry after you shower.
- Steri-strips usually stay on for 2 weeks over your breast incision, and 1 week over the underarm incision. It is ok if the strips fall off a few days sooner than expected. Steri-strips will start to curl off at the ends during that time. Remove underarm strips after 1 week, and breast strips after 3 weeks, or allow them to fall off on their own.
- For pain, take prescribed pain medication, Tylenol,[®] or ibuprofen every 4 to 6 hours as needed. If you are taking prescribed pain medication, drink plenty of fluids as they can cause constipation. To prevent constipation, you may take an over-the-counter stool softener such as Colace[®].
- You may wear a bra, camisole, or T-shirt after surgery. Some women find it comfortable to wear a bra 24 hours a day for the first few days after surgery. This will give support to the area of your surgery. If a bra is uncomfortable, you do not need to wear it.
- Do **not** lift anything heavy (more than 10 pounds), or do repetitive arm motions like raking or vacuuming for 1 week after surgery. After 1 week, you may go back to your usual exercise when you feel ready. Start slowly and rest often.
- Your surgeon will call you to talk about the pathology results about 7-10 business days after surgery. Sometimes it can take longer to get the results. Your follow-up appointments will be discussed at this time.

Please call if you have: excessive pain, fever of 101 or higher, swelling, or redness extending more than 1/2 inch from an incision, or a drainage-soaked dressing.

You may call the Center for Breast Cancer at 617-726-6500 to speak to a nurse practitioner if you have any concerns or questions.



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