



Division of General & Gastrointestinal Surgery

PATIENT DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING

BREAST SURGERY

DIET

- ✓ Drink plenty of fluids.
- ✓ Unless otherwise directed, you may resume your regular diet.
- ✓ Your appetite may be less than normal. Eat when you are hungry. Do not force yourself to eat! Concentrate on fluids. It is important to stay hydrated.

ACTIVITY

- ✓ Do NOT drink alcohol, drive or operate heavy machinery for 24 hours after your surgery or while taking pain medication.
- ✓ Do not do any hard physical activity for 1 week after surgery.

PAIN MANAGEMENT

We will supply you with a prescription for a mild narcotic pain medication. You are not required to take it. If you do take it, please do not drive or drink alcohol as these in combination may make you drowsy. Alternatively, you may take Tylenol (acetaminophen) or ibuprofen (e.g. Advil) as needed.

Use ice to help with the pain and swelling in the area for 24 hours after the surgery.

MEDICATIONS

- ✓ Unless otherwise directed, you may resume your medications.
- ✓ If you were prescribed antibiotics, take them until they are finished.

INCISION CARE

- ✓ Your incision may be covered with a waterproof dressing (Tegaderm). Leave it on for 2-3 days.
- ✓ It is normal for blood and/or fluid to collect under the dressing.
- ✓ Leave the steri-strips (little white strips of tape) in place after you take off the dressing. These will fall off by themselves. If after 10 days they have not fallen off, you may remove them yourself.
- ✓ You may shower once the dressing comes off.

- ✓ Do **NOT** take a bath or swim for two weeks after surgery unless you first check with your doctor.
- ✓ Many women find it more comfortable to wear a bra day and night for at least 48 hours after surgery. You may find it more comfortable to continue this for 2 weeks after surgery. This will support the incision (decreasing scar size) and the strain on the biopsy site (decreasing bruising).
- ✓ Once any drains and steri-strips are removed, you may massage the area with lotion, Vitamin E cream or aloe. After two to three months, the scar will soften.

DRAIN CARE

- ✓ Take a sponge bath while the drain is in unless your doctor says otherwise.
- ✓ Record drain output daily.
- ✓ If you have a drain, keep the drain site clean and covered with a dry dressing at all times.

COMMON PROBLEMS

- ✓ If you had a sentinel node biopsy, you may notice a green tinge to your face and urine. This should go away after 12-24 hours.
- ✓ Sentinel node biopsy may also result in some bright blue staining of the skin of your breast. The *MAY* last up to one year, it usually fades within 1-2 weeks.

WHEN TO CALL YOUR DOCTOR

- ✓ If you develop a fever $>101^{\circ}$ F
- ✓ If you have a lot of swelling or bleeding.
- ✓ If you have a sudden increase in wound drainage, especially if it is cloudy or has a foul odor.
- ✓ Persistent vomiting or diarrhea.

FOLLOW-UP

- ✓ Please call the first business day after discharge to schedule a follow-up appointment.
- ✓ In case of emergencies, call your doctor's office. If the office is closed, contact the hospital operator at **(617) 726-2000** and have your surgeon or the surgeon-on-call paged.