



## Post-Operative Care Instructions for Mastectomy or Axillary Lymph Node Dissection:

### General

- Wear a comfortable garment to which you can pin your drain(s).
- Take your regular medications unless you were instructed otherwise.
- You may resume your regular diet.
- You may resume driving once you have stopped using the Hydromorphone (Dilaudid) AND you are able to shoulder check your blind spot without pain.

### Pain

- Alternate taking Acetaminophen (Tylenol) and Ibuprofen (Advil) for pain if needed.
- If you have been prescribed Meloxicam (Mobicox), use these instead of Ibuprofen (Advil) for the first 3 days.
- If you have been prescribed Gabapentin (Neurontin), use this as directed until it is used up, then stop. This is to be taken on a regular basis whether you have pain or not.
- Take Hydromorphone (Dilaudid) only if the other medications do not adequately control your pain. The goal is to control your pain so that you can still function, you will not be pain free, (i.e., 4/10 or less on the pain scale).

### Activity

- In general, try to use your arm as normally as possible (with the exception of lifting).
- After your surgery, please do not lift anything over 10lbs for 2 weeks.
- Please refrain from heavy activity, straining, or sports that will put strain on the incision for 2 weeks.
- You should have received a copy of the book "Exercises after Breast Surgery". Please follow the exercises in this book.
  - Exception: If you have a drain, please do not lift your arm above shoulder height until this has been removed.

**Call the nurse navigator (905-632-3730 ext. 1339) on the day of discharge to arrange follow up in approximately 2-3 weeks, and if you have any questions or concerns.**



## Dressings/Wound Care

- Remove the outer dressing(s) after 48 hours, but keep the steri-strips, (i.e., the white tapes) intact.
- After the outer bandages have been removed, you may only shower once your drain(s) have been removed or once your surgeon has told you it is safe. After showers, pat the area dry, do not rub, so that the steri-strips remain intact.
- Do not submerge your incision(s) (i.e., no swimming, hot tubs, etc.) for 2 weeks.
- Keep your steri-strips on for 10-14 days. If still intact after 14 days, you may gently remove your steri-strips with running water and mild, unscented soap.
- Do not use deodorant, antiperspirant, creams, oils, etc near your incisions until the last scab has fallen off.
- Please keep your scar(s) out of the sun for 1 year. If this is not possible, use a sunscreen with SPF 30 or greater whenever outside.

## Drains

- Nursing Care via LHIN Community Care has been arranged to help you take care of your drains. They will remove the drain(s) once the output has been less than 25 mL per 24 hours for 2 consecutive days.
- If you have more than 1 drain, only 1 drain should be removed per day.
- Your drains should be “milked” a few times a day. This can be done by you or someone helping you.
- Please record how much is coming out of your drains per day.
- Do NOT raise your arm above shoulder height while the drains are in place.

## Red Flags

- It is normal to have minor swelling, bruising, and small amounts of bleeding from your incision.
- Seek medical attention if:
  - The skin around your incisions is red
  - Your incisions are separating
  - There is any drainage from the incisions, or significant bleeding from the incisions
  - You have worsening pain in your incisions
  - You develop a fever (>38.5°C or >101°F)
  - You have shortness of breath or chest pains

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