

Patient Instructions Following Plastic Surgery of the Breasts

The following Instructions apply to patients who have undergone a breast reduction or a breast lift (also called a mastopexy). Since no two patients are ever exactly alike in their surgical needs, it is important to remember that the details of the surgery performed, as well as the rate of healing, may vary from one patient to the next. Customarily, we may choose to individualize the following guidelines according to each patient's needs. In such instances, we will instruct you to do so. Otherwise, we urge you to follow the advice below very carefully in order to accelerate your healing and maximize your surgical outcome.

1. Since you have just undergone a surgical procedure, use good common sense in the first 14 days after surgery in restricting your normal activities, exercise regimens, and any activity requiring heavy lifting or straining.
2. You may be up and walking in your home on the day after your surgery, but some fatigue may persist for 3 to 7 days because of the normal effects of anaesthesia and of the surgical procedure
3. It is acceptable to do some light walking 48 to 72 hours after your surgery. Avoid lifting heavy objects in the first two weeks. In addition, avoid raising your arms above your shoulders for the first two weeks. Jogging and non-contact exercise should not be resumed until 4 weeks, while strenuous sports will require at least 6 weeks of healing before being safely resumed.
4. You may return to taking your usual medication the day following surgery unless otherwise instructed. Remember that aspirin containing medication, and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications, such as ibuprofen, as well as any other blood thinning medication should be avoided for two weeks following surgery. Alcohol, vitamin-E, and cigarette use should be avoided for two weeks after surgery. Vitamin E cream should not be applied to the site of the operation until 6 weeks after surgery.
5. If you notice dryness and irritation at the site of the operation, you may apply a small quantity of mild antibiotic ointment such as polysporin, or bacitracin to the incision line twice a day, unless you are allergic.
6. It is normal for small quantities of clear, straw-colored, or pink liquid to leak from the incisions for up to ten days after your surgery. If drainage smells very bad, and is thick, green or yellow, please contact your doctor.
7. The initial dressing will stay in place until your first postop visit with your doctor. Thereafter, the dressing should be kept clean, and changed daily, as per the instructions from your doctor.
8. You should wear an old, comfortable bra, day and night, for the first 4 weeks after surgery. Any additional use will depend on the clinical healing of each individual patient, and will be discussed when you meet your doctor.

9. Avoid wetting the operative site completely for one week after surgery. It is suggested that you wash with a facecloth the other areas of your person during this period. During the second week after your surgery, (or after your first postop visit with your doctor) you may take a shower, but the spray of water should not be directed at the operative site, and the incision line should not be soaked for more than five minutes at a time. During the third week after surgery, all reasonable forms of bathing are permitted.
10. During bathing, some of the steri-strips may peel off on their own, as they get wet. This is normal. Please avoid pulling on these; it is preferable to allow them to fall out on their own. Any steri-strips remaining after three weeks may be safely removed.
11. Most of the stitches used in plastic surgery of the breasts are self-absorbing. Occasionally, some removable sutures may be used since not all persons and surgeries are alike. If you have removable sutures, these will be removed approximately two weeks following surgery.
12. Excessive exposure to sun (including sun-tanning parlors) in the first 3 weeks after surgery may result in prolonged swelling and injury to the scar as well as to your skin. Thereafter, you should always protect your skin with a strong sunscreen containing PABA (p-aminobenzoic acid) in order to decrease the inevitable damage and ageing effects of the sun on your skin.
13. Scarring is always difficult to predict exactly, but by following the instructions given here, and those given to you by your surgeon, you will be giving yourself the best chances of having a good result. Also, please keep in mind that scar healing is a long process. Although the majority of healing occurs in the first six weeks, the overall operative site will continue to mature, fade and flatten for three months to two years following surgery.
14. Finally, it is **very important** for your well-being that you completely follow all the instructions given to you by your doctor, and that we check your progress regularly after surgery. If you have any urgent problems, please contact your doctor immediately.

We greatly appreciate the confidence you have shown us by allowing us to assist you in improving your appearance and health. In addition, you can be assured of our very best efforts in achieving the most satisfactory surgical result possible for your particular anatomy and condition.

- Daniel L Durand MD



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