

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TISSUE EXPANDER BREAST RECONSTRUCTION

AFTER SURGERY

- After your surgery, your breast incisions will have an outer dressing which may be removed after 24-48 hours. The steri strips (paper tape) on the incisions should be left in place until your first appointment. If there is no ooze on the dressing you do not need to keep the steri strip covered but you may cover with a gauze or feminine pad as a precaution to protect your clothing.
- You will not need to wear a bra.
- You will be sent home with a prescription for pain medication and antibiotics for a few days. Take as directed.
- You may shower after your drains have been removed (home care will be arranged to remove your drain). They will be removed when the amount of fluid coming out reaches the desired level (<30cc/24hrs) or by 1-2 weeks as determined by your doctor.
- Many wrinkles and folds that are present initially will fade and resolve with time as the scar tissue settles and the implant is expanded. Major asymmetries still present at the end of 3-6 months may require a revision surgery.
- **Activity after surgery:** It is OK to do arm movements to ensure you are able to move but limit repetitive activities, chores at home etc. You won't be able to do any lifting, housework or reaching in the days following your surgery (that includes picking up your child!), so make sure someone else will be available to help out during your recovery. Arrange for someone to help take care of your younger children for at least 2 weeks after surgery. Arrange for someone to do house work for the first 4-6 weeks.
- **TISSUE EXPANSION:** The injections into your port (which is under your skin) will begin at your first or second visit back to see Dr Fortin. Once a week you will have saline injected into your implant until it is fully inflated. The breast area may feel 'engorged' or tight with pressure for about 24-48 hours after each expansion. You may want to take one of your painkillers prior to your injection so that it will give you some relief for after the expansion.

SIGNS OF INFECTION

- These symptoms may include swelling, bruising and discomfort or pain in the breasts that is beyond normal levels. Use a thermometer to take your temperature frequently in the first few days after surgery, as fever can be a sign of infection. Any signs of infection should prompt you to contact Dr. Fortin urgently or head to your local medical provider.
- Fever greater than 100.4° F or 38.5° C.
- Fresh bleeding, other than that of a minor nature.
- Excessive swelling, redness or a significant difference in size between the two breasts.
- Pain not relieved by two pain relieving tablets.
- Any discharge from the incision sites.