

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR BREAST AUGMENTATION

### BEFORE SURGERY

- Surgery will need to be cancelled if there is any chance that you are pregnant.
- Quit smoking at least 6 weeks prior to surgery as nicotine can impair and delay healing.
- Stop all aspirin containing products, medications that contain blood thinners (Motrin, Advil etc.), Vitamin E and herbal supplements 2 weeks prior to surgery. You can take 1 multivitamin a day.
- Let the doctor know all medications taken daily.
- If you have your menstrual cycle, please wear a feminine napkin. Do not wear a tampon.
- Arrange for someone to drive you to and from surgery, as well as to stay with you postoperatively to help with activities and daily living, i.e. walking, going to the bathroom.
- 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.
- Prepare your bed. Make sure you have plenty of pillows on your bed and arrange them so that you can sleep on a smooth incline. The important thing is to keep your upper body elevated for a few days after surgery to help your breast implants stay in position during the initial healing process.
- Prior to surgery, take things in your home that you have to reach up for (for example, things on a high shelf or cupboard) and put them on a countertop or table.
- The night before your surgery, you may have a shower with an anti-bacterial soap.
- If you develop an illness right before your surgery, let your surgeon know. A simple cold could cause complications with the anesthesia. You may need to postpone your surgery until you feel better.
- Be aware that you will not be able to fly for two weeks following your operation.
- Long drives are not advisable within the first 48 hours after surgery. If travelling, be sure to take walking breaks every hour to help prevent blood clots.

### THE DAY OF SURGERY

- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight before surgery (including water, gum and candy).
- You may shower and shampoo your hair the night before or morning of your surgery.
- You may brush and rinse your teeth, but do not eat or drink anything.
- Shower and clean the surgical area thoroughly with any antibacterial soap the night before.
- Do not wear makeup or moisturizers on your face or eyes.
- Remove all nail polish from your fingers, toes (even clear) and acrylic nails. If you have acrylic nails, one nail must be removed. Do not wear perfumes or scented products.
- Do not bring any jewellery or valuables with you on the day of surgery.
- Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothes, preferably button up or zipped up top. Wear flat, comfortable shoes. Remove contact lenses, dentures and nipple rings before surgery.

- Someone must drive you home and stay with you the first night. Please plan your ride to be available at the time you are discharged. This could be early in the morning or late in the afternoon. Please have a ride available on short notice.
- Arrive 2 hours before surgery as instructed during your pre-op appointment.
- Bring your Health Card.
- After surgery, a post-op appointment will be scheduled with your surgeon.

### AFTER SURGERY (POST-OP) INSTRUCTIONS

- You may or may not have drains, (small tubes the size of IV tubing), coming out under each breast. Drains will be removed when drainage is less than 30 ml for 24 hours.
- You should be resting the remainder of the day of surgery. Elevate your body on two pillows. You may want to sleep in a recliner or lounge chair. You may need assistance getting up and down. It is very important during the first 24 to 48 hours to get plenty of rest, which is very important to the healing process.
- Your breasts will be bandaged after surgery to provide support and protection. Keep your dressings as clean and dry as possible until the dressings are removed in a few days.
- You should wear a bra for support at all times for 2 weeks and during the day for 4 to 6 weeks after surgery. Many women are comfortable in cotton sports bras WITHOUT underwire or a post-surgical bra.
- Start walking as soon as possible as this helps to reduce swelling and lowers the chance of blood clots.
- Avoid sleeping on your tummy or your chest for at least 3 weeks after surgery
- Avoid alcohol entirely until you have stopped taking your pain medication. The combination of alcohol and pain medication can be very dangerous.
- If you are taking vitamins with iron, resume these as tolerated.
- Avoid smoking, or cut back as much as possible during the first 10 days after surgery. Smoking reduces oxygen levels in the blood, interferes with healing and increases the risk for complications.
- Do not drive until you are no longer taking any pain medications (narcotics).
- Do not drive until you have full range of motion with your arms.
- No bending over or lifting for 2 weeks post-op.
- No lifting greater than 10 lbs for 3 weeks.
- You can usually perform small physical tasks within a couple of days if they cause no discomfort or pain – let your body tell you what it can and can't do.
- Jogging, tennis, swimming, golf and the like may be resumed 4 weeks after surgery.
- Resume sexual activity as your body allows. Sexual activity involving the breasts can be commenced at around 4 weeks although at this stage only very gentle handling of the breasts is advised. More vigorous handling can be commenced only after 2 months. In general, if it hurts, don't do it.
- Long drives are not advisable within the first 48 hours after surgery. If travelling, be sure to take walking breaks every hour to help prevent blood clots.

- Most patients may return to work within 2 weeks. If your job is physically demanding, you will require a longer recovery time, typically 4 weeks.
- More vigorous physical activity such as upper body weight training can raise your blood pressure and possibly cause bleeding and should be avoided for at least 3 weeks after surgery, particularly when the breast implants are placed under the muscle to avoid causing the implants to be pushed upward. Once you resume exercising, start slow and let your body tell you what it can handle.
- Avoid straining or extending your arms over your head for about a week after surgery. This allows tissues around the breast implants to heal faster.
- Decreased activity may promote constipation, so you may want to add more raw fruit to your diet.

## PAIN CONTROL

- Take pain medication as prescribed.
- Do not take aspirin or ibuprofen until approved by your physician. There is a risk of developing bleeding into your wound area for two weeks after surgery. For this reason, aspirin and anti-inflammatory over-the-counter products (Motrin, Ibuprofen, Advil, etc.) must be avoided.

## INCISION CARE

- Leave any adhesive strips (Steri-Strips) on your skin for 2-4 weeks. They should be changed or removed if becoming oozy from underneath or if you see yellow or green discharge. Remove if any rash develops. otherwise they will help with the scar.
- Keep incisions clean and inspect daily for signs of infection.
- Avoid exposing scars to sun for at least 12 months (1 year). Even through a bathing suit, a good deal of sunlight can reach the skin and cause damage. Wear a sunscreen with a skin protector factor (SPF) of at least 30 for at least a year when in the sun and be extremely careful if areas of your breast have reduced sensitivity.

## BREAST MASSAGE

- It is advised to begin breast implant massage after the first week after surgery.
- The technique of massage should displace the implant in all 4 directions (North, South, East, West) to maintain an open pocket. This should be done at least 1-2 times daily. This will be demonstrated at your first visit to the doctor after surgery.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

- During the first week, attempt to sleep on your back instead of on your side. We want your implants to stay in a perfect position during the initial healing process. If you cannot sleep on your back, sleep in another comfortable position. Elevate your body from the waist up on two pillows. You may need assistance getting up and down. Get a step stool if your bed is high.
- Moderate discomfort of the breasts should gradually improve. If pain begins to increase, contact your physician's office.

- Initially deep breathing may hurt. Take pain medications to allow yourself to breathe easily.
- Most women experience some fatigue and discomfort during the first 48 hours, recovery from breast augmentation surgery is usually speedy and without complications.
- After breast augmentation surgery, your breast tissues must stretch before the implants settle into their permanent position. This may take several weeks or even several months for women with small breasts.
- While wearing the tensor wrap, deep breathing may hurt. This will improve when you switch to a bra. Moderate swelling will occur and will be maximal at 2 days after surgery. Swelling is usually gone in 3 weeks, but occasionally can persist longer.
- Bruising will occur and will be maximal at 3-4 days and can persist for 3 weeks.
- Your sutures are dissolving and do not need to be removed. They are buried and should reabsorb over the coming 6 to 8 months. There may be some small areas in the incisions which will feel firmer before softening.
- There are always areas of numbness especially around the incisions. This will generally subside. Nipple sensation is normal in some women immediately after breast augmentation surgery. Others may experience numbness or hypersensitivity as the nerves regenerate. For most women, sensation levels return to normal over time. Place a band-aid across the nipple, a topical anesthetic cream or numbing cream for relief if your nipples become overly sensitive.
- You may hear and feel “sloshing” in your breast after surgery. This is due to air that is trapped in the space around the breast implant and the natural fluid that accumulates after an operation. Sloshing usually dissipates within a few weeks as the air and fluids are naturally absorbed by the body.
- Use ice packs as directed by your doctor to reduce swelling, bruising and pain. You can use zip lock bags filled with water and frozen, packs of frozen fruits or vegetables or the reusable gel packs available at drug stores.
- Wear comfortable clothing: including loosely-fitting shirts that open in the front (avoid pull-over shirts). Sweat pants, pyjama bottoms and other pull-on pants work well.

## APPEARANCE

- It is quite common for the two breasts to heal differently. One may swell more, one may feel more uncomfortable or the shapes may initially differ. After complete healing, they should look remarkably similar and natural.
- Your breasts will appear very round and high on your chest. Your breasts will resume a more natural shape over the next few months
- Occasionally, you may have staining or drainage from the incisions over the first few weeks. You may place gauze or a cotton sanitary napkin in your bra to protect your clothes.
- The skin of your breasts may become shiny. This is a result of the swelling that occurs after surgery. Within a few weeks, the edema and the swelling will subside and the skin will look more normal.
- Your incisions may be raised, red, and feel hard for several months. The final result of healing will not be apparent for approximately one year after the operation. You can massage them after the first 2 weeks to help them soften.

- A scar is a part of the body's natural healing process. Scars left by breast augmentation surgery are usually small and well-hidden in the crease beneath the breast inframammary fold incision around the nipple or in the armpit. Your scars will be firm and pink for several weeks and begin to fade after several months. They will never completely disappear but should be very discreet. It may take up to a year for the scars to take on their permanent appearance.

## NORMAL SYMPTOMS

Normal symptoms experienced after breast augmentation surgery are usually minor and subside rapidly with proper care. These symptoms include:

- **Moderate swelling and bruising**, which are normal after any surgery. Swelling can make your breasts feel very firm and the skin may take on a shiny appearance. Swelling may take several weeks to subside as the breasts soften and become more natural. Use ice packs as directed by your doctor to reduce swelling. Any bruising that occurs should decrease 7 to 10 days after surgery.
- **Mild to moderate discomfort and pain**, which is normal after any surgery. Take your pain medications as prescribed, limit your physical activity and any pain should diminish rapidly during the first few days. Back pain caused by lying and sleeping with your upper body propped up can be treated with a heating pad, hot water bottle or microwaveable pack.
- **Crusting along the incision lines**, which can usually be treated with an antibiotic ointment, depending on your doctor's instruction. To reduce redness and excessive crusting, clean your incision twice a day with 3% hydrogen peroxide and cotton or a cotton swab.
- **Itching**, which many women experience as nerve endings heal. Ice and skin lotions or moisturizers often help to provide relief from itching. Keep in mind to avoid getting lotion in an incision.
- **Numbness**, which is due to the severing of small sensory nerves. Sensation gradually returns during the first couple of months.
- **Tingling, burning or shooting pains**, which are common (especially in the nipples) as the nerves regenerate during the first few weeks.

## SIGNS OF INFECTION

You should feel better each day after your operation. The following may indicate 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.

- 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.
- Symptoms such as itching, development of a rash, wheezing, and tightness in the throat would probably be due to an allergy. Should these occur, discontinue all medications and call Dr. Fortin's office at 705- 523-7060 for instructions.