

## INSTRUCTIONS AFTER TRAM FLAP BREAST RECONSTRUCTION

- After your surgery your mastectomy and abdominal incisions will have an outer dressing which may be removed after 23-48 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 be expected to wear the binder for abdominal support for 6 weeks after your surgery.
- You should wear a comfortable bra (avoid under-wire bras) during the day for support. Immediate breast reconstructions (same time as mastectomy) are more in need of support than delayed reconstructions which are usually much more firm. Immediate breast reconstructions will benefit from wearing a bra most of the time for the first few weeks. This will help to shape and position the breasts which will have a tendency to want to fall with gravity (down and outwards).
- By the time you are discharged from hospital you will likely be off of antibiotics. Any sign of infection, including redness, increasing pain or swelling, fever or chills is reason to contact Dr. Fortin's office or go directly to the HSN emergency. Dr. Fortin will assess you as soon as possible.
- 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 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. Major asymmetries still present at the end of 3 months may require a revision surgery.
- Prepare your bed ahead of time. Ideally, you should try to sleep on the ground level of your home to avoid using the stairs. Get a step stool if your bed is high. Have extra pillows available so that you can sleep at 45 degree angle first 3-4 days (a lazyboy recliner is an easy place to sleep for the first few nights).
- **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 some 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.
- Your binder can start to be removed more frequently after one month. A good test of whether you are ready for that is to try to do your normal activities around the house for an hour or two. If you have back or belly pain or ache that should tell you that you should keep the binder on for another week or two. You may try 'spanks' undergarments as a substitute for the binder to bridge this time and be more comfortable.
- Nipple reconstruction is optional and is performed after the 3 months or after any revisions have been completed. It may be done in two stages and can be discussed with Dr. Fortin.