

Post Operative Instructions

Breast Reduction Surgery

The goal is to make your surgical experience and recovery as comfortable as possible. Please call us with any questions or concerns.

Please review the following recommendations for postoperative care and the other written and verbal information you have received from your doctor. You play an active and essential role in your recovery process. It is our pleasure to assist you and care for you at any time.

Medications:

You will receive medications for pain (Narcotic), nausea, and a stool softener.

- IF YOU LIVE ALONE, ARRANGE FOR SOMEONE TO STAY OVERNIGHT AFTER SURGERY
- DO NOT drive or operate machinery the first week after surgery or while taking narcotics.
- DO NOT drink alcoholic beverages for 72 hours after surgery
- DO NOT make major decisions, sign contracts, etc. for 24 hours after surgery.

Swelling/Discoloration:

After this type of procedure, the breasts are usually swollen and may show noticeable bruising. Most swelling usually resolves quickly over 7-10 days, while the discoloration will diminish more gradually over 10-14 days. You may notice that one breast will be slightly more or less swollen than the other, slightly higher or lower than the other – this is normal and is not a cause of concern.

What to Expect:

The feeling of tightness is normal. After surgery, you will be “sore” and unable to move very quickly. You may have some loss of sensation in the nipples, the sensation will come back with time.

The following are some recommendations directed at relieving discomfort and speeding the recovery process:

1. The first week you will need to rest frequently, but it is important to walk around the house as tolerated in frequent intervals.
2. Avoid stairs if possible.

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3. For the first week post-op sleep on your back with your head elevated and using the surgical bra that we will provide. This will keep the tension off the incisions. Do not sleep on your side, this will result in swelling of one side vs the other.
4. Every 2-3 hours take deep breaths and force your self to cough to expand your lungs. Perform this activity at least 4-6 times per day.
5. Do not pick-up anything greater than 1-2 lbs the first 2 weeks. The doctor will advise you when you can start lifting anything heavier.
6. Do not exercise until the doctor says you may do so.
7. Do not lift your arms higher than shoulder level for 2 weeks.
8. Do not drive the first week or while you are taking pain medication. After that it will depend on your ability to handle a car without causing any discomfort. You should wear your seatbelt at all times.
9. Do not engage in sexual activity for at least 2-3 weeks after your surgery.
10. No smoking or being around smoke at least the first 6 weeks after your surgery. This will interfere with the healing process.

Nausea rarely occurs following breast reduction; however, if you should experience nausea, take the nausea medication, and please call us immediately.

Pain:

As mentioned above, the pain medication prescribed will decrease the pain substantially but may make you drowsy and dizzy. You may experience a dull ach and tightness in your breasts, but it is very unusual to have significant, sharp pain. Do not apply cold compresses to relief pain, this can compromise the blood supply to the skin. Under no circumstances should ASPIRIN, MOTRIN, ALEVE, ETC. and/or any medications containing aspirin or salicylates be taken. If you are not sufficiently relieved of pain, try alternating doses of extra strength Tylenol and the pain medication prescribed by your doctor. If you have increasing breast pain, evident enlargement of one breast vs the other that is not relieved by the pain medication, please call your doctor immediately.

Temperature:

Generally, the body temperature does not rise much above 100.4 degrees following a surgical procedure. A rise in temperature is an appropriate part of the healing process. You can check your temperature if you feel that your temperature might be elevated only after 24 hours from surgery. If you have a persistent fever above 101.5 degrees that is not relieved by Tylenol, call our office.

Bleeding:

If you experience oozing or bleeding along the suture line, do not rub the areas but apply gentle pressure to the area using a gauze pad. It is normal to ooze for a few days after the procedure, however, if its not stopping after 3 days or if the fluid is a significant amount or if one breast is significantly larger than the other call Dr. Calva immediately.

Diet:

Eat light the first 24 hours, clear liquids advancing to a regular diet as tolerated the following day. If you have persistent nausea stick to a bland diet until it subsides. Avoid foods that can cause a lot of gas. This can cause abdominal distention and nausea. Small frequent meals are best. The pain medicine may cause constipation. Drink plenty of fluids. You may take any over the counter laxative as needed.

Some suggestions to ease abdominal discomfort or indigestion after surgery:

1. Drink a lot of water- 8 glasses a day!
2. Drink warm liquids (tea or coffee).
3. Prune juice for constipation.
4. If severely constipated use Colace (2 tabs in a.m. and p.m. taken with one glass of warm water), and fleet enemas (regular or oil retention) as a last resort.

Dressings:

You will have an a surgical bra (compression garment) over your breast dressings. You do not need to change them. You should wear the bra at all times for 8 weeks after surgery.

1. Please remove the dressings 48 hours after surgery
2. There will be steri-strips in place, leave them alone as they will fall off on their own.
3. It is normal to have numbness over the surgical sites for several weeks or months.
4. Do not use a heating pad or cold compression around the surgical sites. It could cause necrosis of the skin.
5. You may not shower the first 48 hours - sponge bath only, until dressings are removed in 48 hours. Then you may shower and let the soapy water run down the incisions. **DO NOT SOAK IN A BATHTUB OR GO SWIMMING** for 2 weeks.
6. It is normal to see dried bloody drainage on the bra or dressings.
7. Use the surgical bra 24 hours a day for the first 8 weeks.

Resuming Activities:

1. You should start going back to normal activities after 2 weeks. Start slowly and remember not to push yourself.
2. Continue to **RESTRICT LIFTING** of heavy objects. You may lift up to about 15 pounds in week three and about 20 pounds in week four.
3. No lifting anything heavier than 20 pounds, or any strenuous activity until week eight.
4. Continue wearing your bra for 8 weeks. Can be removed to shower only, but you must wear to work/school, and sleep with it every day.
5. You may begin driving if both drains are out, and no longer taking narcotics, but start slowly. Eventually you will be back to your usual routine.
6. We discourage cardio or any heavy exercises for 8 weeks and weight training for 3 months. All exercises should be done with a controlled tight core. It is easy to gain weight during this time so eat healthy and check your weight regularly.

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7. **PERSONAL GROOMING.** In order to improve and speed wound healing, we recommend the following:
 - You may **SHOWER** starting the second day after surgery, allowing indirect flow of warm water to wash over the wounds. (Do not let the water directly strike the wound and do not immerse or soak the wound.)
8. **HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES.** On your first postoperative day, you are encouraged to be up and around the house with your usual activities except those specifically outlined previously (no heavy lifting, etc). No strenuous activity.
9. **REDUCE EXPOSURE TO SUNLIGHT.** Following surgery the incisions may be more sensitive to sunlight for up to one year. The incision will darken and be more noticeable if exposed to sun. Wearing sun block (minimum of SPF 50) is recommended and protecting incisions with clothing as much as possible. This must be done for up to one year after surgery.
10. **RETURNING TO WORK AND RESUMING SOCIAL ACTIVITIES.** When you return to work/school depends on the amount of physical activity and public contact your job involves and also the amount of swelling and discoloration you develop; the average person is ready to return to work or go out socially after 7-14 days following surgery.

Scars:

During the first several days following surgery, the scars will be imperceptible. They then go through a period of slight swelling and reddening, which can last months. As this subsides, the scars become virtually invisible again, but this might take at least one year. This is the normal maturity process of scars. Any unevenness of the edges of the incisions or lumpiness of the scars is usually temporary and will subside with the passage of time. Again, protect the incision from sunlight for 1 year after surgery. Sunlight will darken the incision and be more noticeable.

Your postoperative office visit:

Sutures are internal and generally take weeks to months for your body to absorb them **AFTER YOUR SURGERY.** Generally you will be asked to return to the office for follow-up at 1 week, 3 weeks, 8 weeks, 6 months, and 1 year post-op. Please arrange your schedule to accommodate these appointments, which we urge you to make immediately following surgery.

Summary:

- Do not be discouraged by swelling and discoloration. These conditions are a normal part of your breast lift procedure and will subside with time.
- Call our office if you experience:
 - Sudden swelling of one of your breasts – this could mean a blood collection
 - Increased discoloration (redness) on your skin associated with tenderness and swelling

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- Any progressive increasing breast pain not relived by medications
- Persistent temperature above 101.5 degrees that is not relieved by Tylenol.

Your recovery and ultimate result is very important to us. Please read this handout carefully and keep it readily accessible as a reference after your surgery.

If you have ANY questions or problems not addressed in this handout, please do not hesitate to contact us at our office at (305) 203-3938 during the day, after normal business hours or on weekends. Dr. Daniel Calva's cell phone is (305) 814-9582.

- After business hours or weekends – (305) 203-3938
- Dr. Dan Calva's Cell Phone – (305) 814-9582