

BREAST AUGMENTATION POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The following is a list of general expectations and instructions for your care prior to and following your breast augmentation. Please thoroughly read these instructions as most of your questions should be answered here. Instructions for your care will be reviewed with you again the morning after surgery. Following these instructions carefully should help you get the best results from your surgery.

PREOPERATIVE

- Please read your entire pre-op packet.
- Plan ahead to ensure a more relaxed recovery; stock the house with comfort foods and arrange a comfortable place to sleep.
- Set up a support system, someone reliable to drive you to postoperative appointments and help with postoperative care.
- Avoid smoking as much as possible. If you are also having a breast lift, NO SMOKING for one month before and after surgery.
- Stop blood thinners (aspirin, Advil, Aleve, Motrin, ibuprofen, Plavix, etc.) one week prior to your surgery, unless otherwise instructed.

POSTOPERATIVE CARE

Help at Home

It is very important to have a strong support system during the post-op period. You must have someone available to drive you home after surgery and stay with you through the night. We will not perform surgery if these arrangements have not been made. It is normal for a patient to become light-headed when rising from a sitting or lying position or when removing dressings; this is why it's important to have someone with you to help.

Medications

- Prescriptions for post-op medications will be given to you the day of your surgery. You will be given a narcotic pain medication. If you have a history of nausea while taking narcotic pain medications, you may also be given a prescription for this. Postoperative antibiotics are usually not needed. Please take these medications as directed when needed, beginning the day of surgery. If you are unable to take any of the medications, please contact our office so we can arrange for other medications to be prescribed.
- If you are prescribed oxycodone, you can also take two extra-strength Tylenol (acetaminophen) every six hours.
- If you are prescribed a version of hydrocodone (Norco, Lortab, Vicodin), this has Tylenol in the pill, and extra Tylenol should not be taken. You may take Tylenol instead of the hydrocodone pill.
- If you experience nausea or vomiting, it is most likely due to the narcotic in the prescription pain medication. Please try to take the prescription with food; if symptoms persist, please contact our office.
- Prescription pain medications can cause constipation. If you feel that you may be getting constipated, take a gentle laxative, such as Milk of Magnesia, or call our office for a stool softener or laxative prescription.
- Unless you have reason not to, start taking ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) the day after surgery. Take a full dose according to the package for at least three weeks after surgery.



Dressings

You will come out of surgery with a dressing applied around your chest and a loose fitting surgical bra on top. Some patients may also be given a strap that rests on the top portion of the breast. You may remove all dressings and shower the day after surgery; no bathing or swimming is permitted for two weeks after surgery.

Sutures

Sutures are usually internal and not visible; instead you will find skin glued on your incision site. This glue acts like an external stitch and will likely stay in place for 10-14 days. Healing of these incisions is a process; at six weeks, your surgical incision line will have gained 80% of its overall strength. Complete healing does not occur for up to one year.

Position

Sleep on your back for at least the first week after surgery. In order to avoid turning on your side, you may use a pillow on each side of you during sleep. If you are a restless sleeper, you may consider sleeping in a recliner chair. You can help reduce the amount of swelling in the breasts by elevating and supporting your head with two pillows.

Use of Arms/Pecs

As you know, your surgery includes partial placement of breast implants under the pectoralis muscle. Because of this position, your implant can be affected by the use of your pectoralis, such as when performing a push-up, getting out of bed, or lifting something heavy. Starting the day after surgery, you should perform gentle range of motion exercises of your shoulders; this includes lifting your arms above your head.

Activities

Any type of strenuous activity can induce swelling and bleeding, especially during the first 10-14 days after surgery. In general, guide your activities by your discomfort — that is, if an activity hurts, don't do it. If your job keeps you sedentary, you may feel well enough to return to work within five to seven days. If you have an active job, you will need more time. If the swelling or discomfort increases, you most likely have done too much too soon. In general, you should avoid strenuous activities for at least four weeks and then gradually increase activity. At six weeks after surgery, you should be able to resume normal, full-strength lifting and exercise.

Sun Exposure

Sunlight will cause all surgical incisions to darken. Surgical incisions are darkest from two to three months after the surgery. One to two years after the surgery, your surgical incisions will begin to fade.

During the early postoperative period, protecting your surgical incisions from sunlight will promote quicker fading. Even through clothes, a good deal of sunlight can reach the skin and cause damage. It is imperative that you wear a sunscreen with a skin-protection factor (SPF) of at least 30 when you are going to be in the sun.

Smoking

If you are having only a breast augmentation and no additional surgical procedures, smoking is not prohibited before or after the surgery. Smoking is discouraged and does cause a more visible scar.

If you are having a breast augmentation that is to include a breast lift (mastopexy), you should have stopped smoking one month prior to surgery and will need to remain smoke-free for one month after surgery. Smoking greatly increases the risks associated with surgery and if you cannot stop smoking for one month prior to surgery, we will cancel the operation. Nicotine causes the majority of bad effects from smoking and, therefore, nicotine replacements (patches, gum, etc.) are not permitted either.



POSTOPERATIVE EXPECTATIONS

Healing of Sensory Nerves

As nerves heal, they can produce areas of burning and tingling. If these sensations cause pain, gentle self-massage can help desensitize the area tenderness. If the pain gets progressively worse and intolerable, please contact our office to schedule an appointment with Dr. Lewis. This will help to ensure that you are not developing an infection or hematoma (blood accumulation).

Asymmetry

The two breasts commonly heal quite differently. One breast may swell more, feel more uncomfortable, or have a different initial shape than the other. Everyone has some asymmetry in their breasts; your surgery was designed to minimize this, but will not eliminate asymmetry. After complete healing, they will look remarkably similar and natural. You must have patience, but if this causes concern, contact our office immediately.

POSTOPERATIVE APPOINTMENTS

Your first post-op visit to our office will be five to seven days after the surgery, you will return two weeks after that, and then in one month. If you or Dr. Lewis have any concerns, your post-op visits will be more frequent. Visits will decrease in frequency, but Dr. Lewis would like to see you every two years indefinitely, to confirm that all is going well with you and the implants.

CALL DR. LEWIS IF:

- Temperature is greater than 101.5
- Redness around incision
- Increasing pain that is intolerable
- Pus coming from incision
- Severe or sudden swelling
- Swelling in one or both legs
- Shortness of breath
- Heavy bleeding

Please do not hesitate to ever contact our office

804-267-6009

