

SURGICAL ASSOCIATES OF TRAVERSE CITY, P.L.L.C.

1221 Sixth Street, Suite 306 • Traverse City, Michigan 49684 • (231) 935-2400 • Fax (231) 935-2424

Discharge Instructions for Breast Surgery

Lumpectomy with sentinel lymph node biopsy, breast biopsy, mastectomy, partial mastectomy

Wound Appearance and Care

- Your incision may have removable OR absorbable sutures. The incision edges may be crusted with old blood or a scab. Often times there is mild redness along the incision line. Swelling and bruising around the incision is common and usually lasts for a week or so.
- **Gauze bandage:** May be purposefully snug to prevent swelling. This bandage should be removed 48 hours after the procedure, unless you are advised otherwise, then you may shower. You may leave the wound uncovered, unless there is drainage, in which case a light bandage will help to protect your clothing.
- **Tegaderm bandage:** This bandage is a clear, thin adherent piece of plastic, which allows you to see the incision. You may shower with this on. This bandage should be removed **3-5 days** after your surgery. This can be done during your shower.
- Keep incision clean daily with soap and water.
- Do not bathe in a tub or soak area.
- Wearing a snug bra continuously for the first week is advised and generally provides support and comfort.
- **Ice pack:** To help avoid and control swelling, bleeding and pain, an ice pack over the incision may be used for the first 12 - 24 hours alternating 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off as tolerated. A Ziploc bag with crushed ice works fine for this. Be sure to wrap the ice pack in a thin, light cloth to avoid irritation to your skin.
- **Drain Care:** If a drain is placed as part of your surgery, you will be given instructions and a booklet explaining drain care.

Pain Management

- Mild to moderate discomfort usually follows; however, pain response varies with every individual. Usually patients do not experience severe or incapacitating pain. Swelling and bruising are often the cause of discomfort; therefore, the more you have, the more pain you may experience.
- Tylenol, Aspirin, or NSAID's (Motrin, Advil, Naprosyn) are usually suggested for pain control.
- Narcotic prescription may be given for breakthrough pain.
- Take medicine with food or milk to prevent upset stomach.
- You may use an over the counter stool softener (Colace) if needed. Pain pills can cause constipation.
- Use Milk of Magnesia or other gentle laxative if no bowel movement within 3 days of surgery.

Call if you have any of these symptoms

- Fever greater than 101 degrees orally.
- **CHECK TEMPERATURE** if patient has chills, rigors, or sweats.
- Increased swelling, warmth, or redness extending past the incision line.
- Cloudy drainage from the incision site. If you have a drain, see "Drain care instructions".
- Pain not controlled by pain medication.
- Rash, itching, hives, difficulty breathing, nausea, vomiting.

Activity

- Avoid any heavy lifting, straining or athletic activities for 2 - 4 days with affected arm on the side your surgery was done.
- Can return to near normal activity the day after procedure.
- Can do ROM exercises and pendulum exercises.
- If you have a drain, avoid raising your arm above shoulder level. After your drain is removed, you are encouraged to begin moving your arm naturally. Arm exercises may be advised. Ask your doctor.

Diet

- Good nutrition is important to tissue healing.
- Eat a well-balanced diet including all food groups.
- Drink six to eight, 8 oz. glasses of water a day unless fluids are restricted.

Pathology: Tissue pathology usually takes at least 3 - 5 business days to obtain results. If you have not heard from your physician after that time, please call 231-935-2417, and ask to speak with your doctor's nurse.

Additional instructions _____

Call 231-935-2400 to arrange a follow-up appointment in _____ days / weeks.

Should you have any questions or concerns please call Surgical Associates nurses' station at 231-935-2417.
After 5:00 PM call Munson Hospital at 231-935-5000 and ask for your doctor.
There is always a doctor on call for our practice.