

Discharge Instructions: Axillary Lymph Node Dissection - Breast

What To Expect

- Dermabond® (skin glue) will cover your incision and create a protective barrier over the wound.
- A small amount of bruising is normal after surgery.
- After axillary lymph node dissection, you will have 1 drain, a Jackson-Pratt or JP drain.
- The drain is sutured into place and covered with a dry dressing. The dressing can be removed if soiled or to take showers, etc.
- Write down how much comes out of your drain every day. Bring this record with you to your post-operative visit.
- The amount of drainage will slowly decrease over time.
- It is normal for the drainage to change from a reddish color to a straw colored fluid.
- If blue dye was used during the sentinel lymph node biopsy, your skin, urine, and parts of your eyes may be blue for the first 24 - 48 hours after surgery.

Wound Care

- You may shower 24-48 hours after surgery.
- You should keep a clean, dry dressing over the JP drain insertion site.
- When showering, do not try to scrub the incision or drainage site. Do not soak the incision (baths/swimming/hot tubs) for 2 weeks. Allow soap and water to come in contact with your incision and then gently pat dry with a clean towel.
- The Dermabond® will start to come off after about 2 weeks. Do not try to pick off loose edges.
- Avoid bras that rub or put direct pressure on the incision sites.

Restrictions

- It is helpful to walk regularly after surgery.
- Do not lift anything weighing 10 pounds or more. Avoid excessive use of the affected arm (such as weight lifting) until the drain is removed.
- Most home medications can be restarted the day after surgery (24 hours after surgery). We will give you specific instructions about blood thinners, including aspirin, on the medication reconciliation form.
- Do not raise the arm above shoulder level (more than 90 degrees) until the surgical drain is removed.
- Once the drain is removed, begin the range of motion exercises the physical therapist taught you. Progressive use of the affected arm is acceptable and has not been shown to worsen arm swelling.
- Do not drive or make important decisions while on opioid pain medications.

Diet

- You may resume your previous diet. We recommend you begin with lighter foods and if that does not upset your stomach, progress to a regular diet.

Pain Control

- Ibuprofen (Advil®/Motrin®) and acetaminophen (Tylenol®) are over-the-counter pain medicines that work very well for pain control. Please take as directed on the bottle.
- **The maximum daily dose of acetaminophen is 4000 milligrams.** Check all medication labels. Acetaminophen may be an ingredient in over-the-counter and prescription medications.
- You can take 600 mg of ibuprofen (Advil®/Motrin®) every 6 hours or 800 mg every 8 hours. Please take it with food and a tall glass of water.
- You may alternate the ibuprofen and acetaminophen every 3 to 4 hours if needed.

Call Us If...

- you develop a fever higher than 101° F (38.3°C) or have a fever with chills
- an incision becomes red, inflamed, warm, or tender to the touch
- the drainage from the bulb increases in volume, turns dark red with clots, or stops draining completely
- you notice pus-filled, foul-smelling drainage from either the incision or the drain
- you notice that your armpit area is becoming "puffy" or filled with fluid after surgery
- you have severe pain that is not relieved with pain medication

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our clinic at **716-845-3152**. The Breast Center is open 8:00am and 5:00pm on weekdays, but your call will be answered even if the Breast Center is closed.

Follow Up Care

- You should be scheduled for a follow up appointment in the clinic about 1- 2 weeks after surgery.
- At this appointment we will remove the drain if your drainage is less than 30-35 milliliters/24 hrs. This requires removal of a single stitch and is generally well tolerated.
- You will also receive the final pathology report at this visit and discuss any further recommendations or treatments.
- Since this appointment is very important, please contact the clinic if you do not have one scheduled or if you need to change the date or time.