

# Postoperative instructions

## Mastectomy

**Please follow your surgeon's instructions if they differ from the following statements.**

### Your return home

#### Dressing:

- Remove your dressing for four days following the surgery.
- Remove the little white dressings (Steri-strips™) the eighth day following the surgery.
- You may shower. Your dressing is waterproof.
- No baths or pools are permitted for seven days.
- If there is a drain, please keep on a waterproof dressing until the removal of the drain.

#### Elastic (Tensor™):

- Keep the elastic on night and day for the first three days following surgery. This will help prevent pain and bruising. You may also adjust it if necessary.
- Remove the elastic when you shower. You should wear a sports bra which will help prevent any movement of the breast.
- If a tensor has not been placed on your chest, wear a sports bra from the first day of surgery on.

#### Physical activities

- It is important to move your arm and shoulder on the first day after your surgery (an exercise sheet will be given to you if you have had lymph nodes removed).
- No sports for two weeks.
- No driving for one week after your surgery or longer if you are taking pain medication.

#### Pain control and constipation prevention

- Take your prescribed medications regularly or take Tylenol™ and Advil™.
- Drink prune juice and/or take Metamucil™ if you feel constipated. If this is not effective, take one tablespoon of Milk of Magnesia daily or PEG 3350 (polyethylene glycol) such as Restoralax, Lax-a-day or Clearlax until you start having regular bowel movements.
- If this is not effective, take one tablespoon of milk of Magnesia daily until you start having regular bowel movements.
- If you have had a sentinel node biopsy, your urine will be green for approximately 24 to 36 hours and your skin will have a slightly greyish tint for approximately 12 hours.

#### Call your doctor or visit your nearest Emergency Department if you have:

- redness, swelling
- hardening or discharge (other than blood) from the incision
- fever and chills
- increase in pain
- pain and heat in your calf and/or
- sudden shortness of breath

**Note: It is common for women's menstrual cycle to be irregular in the weeks following general anaesthesia.**

**To book your appointment, call your surgeon's office.**

The office information was given your discharge instructions.

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