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Breast Reduction - Post Operative Instructions

At home after surgery: Dr. Hoefflin recommends resting quietly for the first 48 hours after surgery. You should walk or ambulate (with assistance) around your home every couple of hours. Ambulating is one of the best ways of maintaining lower extremity blood flow and preventing deep venous blood clots (DVTs).

Positioning: When resting, keep your head and shoulders elevated on at least 2-3 pillows for the first 48-72 hours to help minimize any post-operative swelling. In addition, flex your thighs by placing several pillows behind your knees. Avoid sleeping on your stomach for at least two weeks following surgery.

Diet: Start with a light diet, preferably liquids or soups, and then progress to a regular diet after 24 hours. This will minimize any post-operative nausea. Avoid salt as it can promote swelling.

Liquids: Drink plenty of fluids (8-10 glasses/day), either water or electrolyte drinks (Gatorade) to maintain your hydration for the first week following surgery.

Antibiotics: Dr. Hoefflin will prescribe you either Keflex (Cephalexin) 500 mg or Cleocin (Clindamycin) 300 mg (if allergic to penicillin or cephalosporins). Keflex should be taken 1 tablet, four times per day; Cleocin should be taken 1 tablet, three times per day. All antibiotics should be taken with food.

Discomfort: Chest discomfort, soreness, and pressure can be minimized with pain medication. Start with ½ a tablet of a pain pill initially, of which may be followed every 3 – 4 hours by another. It is best to take pain medication with food. Keep in mind that the pain medication can cause constipation. A helpful adjunct is to replace every other dose of pain medication with a tablet of Tylenol (650 mg) to help minimize inflammation. Avoid driving or consuming alcohol while taking prescription pain medicine.

Incisions: Your incision lines will be covered with special tapes, of which should be left in place for 7 days. After 7 days, when showering, you may gently wash the breasts with soap and slowly remove the tapes that are starting to lift off.

Drains: Small drains may be placed under your skin (in the breast) to remove any accumulating fluid after surgery. Our staff will instruct you on the day of surgery on how to perform these functions. The bulbs connected to the end of the drains should be kept

compressed at all times. Please remove the fluid and record the output from the bulb three times per day. Bring this record with you to each office appointment. Drains are typically removed when there is less than 30cc's of drainage over a 24 hour period.

Showering: You may shower on the third after surgery. Before taking a shower, remove the bra and gauze pads covering your incisions. These gauze pads may be replaced after showering if needed. The small white tapes ("steri-strips") that directly cover your incisions should be left on for 7 days. You may wash yourself everywhere with a mild soap. Avoid submerging your incisions in a bath, swimming pool, or whirlpool for two weeks after surgery.

Swelling: Maximal swelling typically occurs three to five days after surgery, then begins to dramatically improve. Mild bruising typically resolves within 7-10 days after surgery. Your final aesthetic appearance may take 6-8 weeks. **Arnica Montana** (can be purchased at our office), taken both before and after surgery, can assist in decreasing any postoperative swelling or bruising.

Activity: For the **first 48 hours** after surgery, keep your arm movements to a minimum. Your arms should not be used to support your body or to lift anything heavy. **After 2 weeks**, you may engage in light activity (i.e. light walking). **By 4 weeks**, stretching, yoga, or light-weight exercises can be resumed. Heavy weights and all pre-surgery activity may be resumed **after 6 weeks**. You may resume driving generally one week after surgery, provided you can respond and stop in emergency situations.

Sutures: Most sutures are absorbable, and dissolve generally 4-6 weeks after surgery. Any remaining sutures, if present, are usually removed in 7-10 days after surgery.

Sports bra: Dr. Hoefflin will provide you with a soft elastic sports bra, which should be continuously worn for two weeks. It can then be replaced with a purchased sports bra, which should be worn for a total of 6 weeks following your surgery. During your recovery, you should avoid wearing an under-wire bra.

Sensation: It is normal to have itching and/or areas of numbness along your breast or nipple areolar complex following your surgery. This gradually subsides after 2-3 months as your body progresses through the healing process.

Follow-up appointment: Your first postoperative appointment to see Dr. Hoefflin typically occurs 24 hours after surgery. This should be scheduled prior to your surgery.

Breast massaging exercises: These exercises are initiated one week after surgery and assist in keeping both the scar tissue within the breast and incisional scars as soft as possible. Dr. Hoefflin will provide you with information on such exercises one week after surgery.

Minimizing long-term scar visibility: Avoid direct sunlight exposure to your healing scars for the first year following surgery. Select a sunscreen with zinc oxide along with a SPF of 30 or greater for maximal protection. Scars typically fade in months to a year after your surgery. You may start applying a scar cream (available at our office) to minimizing your scar appearance, starting at week 3. The scar cream should be used for 6 months

after surgery.

Smoking: Do not smoke. This is important. Smoking delays healing and can increase your risk of complications.

Concerns:

Dr. Hoefflin can be reached 24 hours a day for any concerns. He can be contacted directly through his office or answering exchange at (310) 858-9105.

Please notify Dr. Hoefflin if:

- If your one breast becomes *significantly larger* than the other;
- If you develop significant bruising across the chest;
- If your drainage output significantly increases from previous levels;
- If you experience a significant increase in pain not relieved by medication;
- If you develop a temperature above 101.5° F, or if you develop redness (like a sunburn) around your incisions;
- If you have any yellowish or greenish drains from the incisions or notice a foul odor;
- If you have any side effects to medications, such as rash, nausea, headache, or vomiting;
- If you have any bleeding from the incisions that is difficult to control with light pressure.

The quality of your breast enhancement procedure may be compromised if you fail to return for any scheduled post-op visits, or follow Dr. Hoefflin's pre- and post-operative instructions.