

Tissue Expansion for Breast Reconstruction Preparation Instructions

What are my instructions?

- Shower with Bactoshield the night before and morning of each tissue expansion.

What should my activity level be?

- Do not perform household chores or heavy lifting greater than 5 to 10 pounds for 6 weeks after placement of tissue expanders.
- Do not soak in hot tubs or swim in lakes while the tissue expander is in place.

Be Aware:

- You cannot have an MRI if you have tissue expanders in place.
- The tissue expanders may be detected via the security scanners at the airport. You will need a note from your Doctor if you plan to travel indicating you have tissue expanders in place with medal.

How should I expect to feel?

- You may experience minor discomfort for 12 to 24 hours after each tissue expansion. This discomfort usually subsides 2 to 3 days after each tissue expansion.
- The tissue expander may shift after the first or second expansion.
- You may experience more discomfort on one side than the other if you have bilateral tissue expanders placed.
- Your posture may change causing you to have some upper and/or mid back pain as you're expanded.

- Your shoulder range of motion may become stiff; continue to perform the shoulder exercises during the tissue expansion process to prevent shoulder stiffness and a frozen shoulder.
- You may find it difficult to sleep because you feel tight across the chest and shoulders.
- You may find it difficult to fit into certain types of tight fitting clothing. You may need to wear oversized shirts until the final exchange of the tissue expander (s).
- You may feel chest tightness or heaviness secondary to being expanded. This usually subsides with time.
- The tissue expanders will remain in place for a minimum of 8 weeks after completing the last tissue expansion. This will allow for the soft tissues (i.e. skin and muscle) to heal and recover from being stretched before the second surgery takes place for the exchange of the tissue expander for a permanent breast implant.
- You will see your surgeon when you have achieved the desired breast size to determine if you need additional expansions and for surgical planning.

Will I achieve my desired breast size?

- This is determined on an individual basis. There is no scientific way to determine the exact breast size. It will be determined by a number of different factors including:
 - How well you tolerate each tissue expansion
 - How well your skin reacts to the expansions
 - The size of the other breast (if a unilateral tissue expander)
 - Previous surgeries or amount of scarring
- We recommend trying on a desired bra size as you approach your desired breast size to see how well the bra size fits.

What will it look like?

- While the tissue is being expanded, a bulge will be created. Depending

upon the location of the tissue expander, the bulge may be considered desirable or unsightly.

- Following the exchange of the tissue expander, a more normal and desirable look should be restored.
- After the exchange for permanent implant, the breasts will feel softer with less fullness in your axilla.

When should I call my doctor?

- If you have increasing swelling or bruising.
- If swelling and redness persist after a few days.
- If you have increased redness along the incision.
- If you have severe or increased pain not relieved by medication.
- If you have any side effects to medications; such as, rash, nausea, headache, vomiting, etc.
- If you have an oral temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher.
- If you have any yellow or greenish drainage from the incisions or notice a foul smell.
- If you have bleeding from the incisions that is difficult to control with light pressure.
- If you have loss of feeling or motion.

Who should I call if I have questions?

- **Clinic Phone (734) 998-6022**

For questions and prescription refills please contact our clinic at during office hours (Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)

- **Hospital Paging (734) 936-6267**

After hours and on weekends, call and ask for the Plastic Surgeon on call.

How do I manage my pain?

Pre-operative Instructions:

- Prior to your surgery, pain medication will be prescribed by your Primary

care physician or referring physician.

- If you **do not** have an established Primary care physician, please call the Physician referral service at **1-800-211-8181**.
- To establish yourself with a primary care physician **prior** to your surgery, please schedule an appointment with the new primary care physician.

Post-expansion Instructions:

- After each expansion, it is expected you will experience some pain even with pain medication.
- You may take Ibuprofen (or other NSAIDs) 600 mg by mouth every 6 to 8 hours with food starting the morning of each tissue expansion and continue to take around the clock for 3 to 5 days as needed for discomfort. You can start this 2 weeks after surgery.
- If you need additional pain control at night, you may take the prescribed Vicodin or Norco you were prescribed for pain immediately after surgery.
- You can take the ibuprofen with the Vicodin or Norco if additional pain relief is required. If the discomfort does not subside or becomes painful please call the clinic for further guidance at **734-998-6022**.
- You may not drive while you are taking narcotic pain medication or otherwise instructed by your surgical team.

Managing Prescription Refills:

- Please call the clinic at **734-998-6022** for medication refills.
- You may also contact us using the Patient Portal at <https://www.myuofmhealth.org>.
- Messages received after hours or on the weekend will be processed the next business day.
- Please allow 24 hours or one business day to have your request reviewed by your surgical team.

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