



# Gender Reassignment Surgery Phalloplasty Pre-Operative Instructions

---

## **What are my pre-operative instructions?**

The following information has been prepared in an effort to facilitate your preparation for and recovery from your gender reassignment surgery. The areas to be addressed are: preparation for the hospital, what to expect in the hospital, your return home and resuming activities of daily living.

## **How do I prepare for my surgery?**

**Hormone therapy is discontinued three weeks before surgery.** Once you receive your surgical date, you should contact your prescribing physician to review all of your medications. Do not alter your hormone therapy until directed by your physician.

### **Medications:**

Some medications interfere with blood's ability to clot. We ask that you NOT take Aspirin, Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil), Naprosyn (Aleve, Naproxen), Vitamin E, Multivitamins (because they contain Vitamin E) or herbal preparations (fish oil, garlic, ginkgo, etc.) one week before surgery through one week after surgery. If you take any of these medications by prescription, you will need to contact your prescribing physician and get permission to stop the medication as directed above.

### **Smoking:**

Smoking interferes with the blood vessels' ability to deliver oxygenated blood to the surgical site. This may result in delayed healing or loss of tissue. If you are a smoker, we will order a test (urine cotinine) four weeks prior to your surgery to confirm you have stopped smoking. You have to be smoke free at least two

weeks before the test in order for the results to come back negative. This means that you will need to stop smoking 6 weeks before surgery. If your results are positive, your surgery will be postponed. We recommend that you not resume smoking. However, if you want to resume smoking after surgery, we insist you refrain from smoking at least four weeks after surgery.

### **Recovery Time:**

When you plan your leave from work, it would be wise to allow six to eight weeks for your recovery. This time is needed to allow the tissue to heal and for you to regain your strength. Each person's recovery period varies and some flexibility in returning to work should be considered.

### **How do I prepare for the hospital?**

Your recovery period is one that needs to be as "hassle" free as possible. Therefore, you will need to make some preparations in advance. Your nutritional needs will be extremely important for a successful recovery. Plan to prepare and freeze meals. Stock up on foods that are easily prepared. Arrange for friends to assist you or collect menus from local restaurants that will deliver. It will be helpful to have friends and family available to do errands for you for a couple weeks. You will not be driving for several weeks after surgery. You will need to make arrangements to have someone drive you to and from your doctor appointments with Dr. Kuzon.

### **Packing for your hospital visit:**

When you pack for the hospital, think light! You will want to include your personal hygiene items, a light robe and slippers. You do not need pajamas or night gowns. Hospital gowns will be the most appropriate garment while inpatient. Plan to wear the same clothes to and from the hospital. It should be items that are loose fitting. You will be in your bed and/or room for several days. It would be wise to bring something to occupy your time. Many people bring books, magazines or an Ipod to pass the time.

### **Washing Instructions before your surgery:**

You will be provided with Bactoshield soap (antibacterial soap) at your history and physical appointment. You are to shower with this soap the night before and morning of your surgery from the neck down. You are not to apply any

deodorant, lotion or powder after these 2 showers. You may resume your normal hygiene products after your surgery.

## **What should I expect during my hospital visit?**

### **Arrival:**

Plan to arrive at the Admitting Department approximately two hours prior to your actual surgery. You will change into a hospital gown, foot warmers and hair cap. At this time an IV will be started through which you will receive fluids and medication. The anesthesiologist responsible for your sedation will be by to check on you. Dr. Kuzon and /or the Plastic Surgery Resident will also check in with you. When everything is in order, you will be given a sedative in your IV. It is at this time that you will be taken back to the surgical suite. Once inside the suite, you will be moved onto the operating table and monitors will be applied. Anesthesia will let you know before they actually begin medication to induce “sleep”.

### **During the surgery:**

Surgery generally lasts six- eight hours. When you awake, you will be in the Recovery Room. You will have on an oxygen mask, an IV, a urinary catheter, up to three surgical drains (1 in the arm, 1 in the groin and 1 in the leg). Pressure stockings that help prevent blood clots will be applied. This room is a very bright and noisy. Be assured that the recovery room staff is monitoring you closely. They will begin to monitor and medicate you for pain almost immediately. Before you are discharged to your room, they will set up and instruct you on the use of the PCA (patient controlled analgesia) pump. This is a method of self-administrating pain medication through your IV.

### **After surgery:**

When you are fully awake (usually about two hours after surgery) you will be transferred to a patient room. You will have an IV, PCA Pump, urinary catheter and surgical drains. You will be up and around after surgery with the assistance of your nurse. Your activity will be limited to your room and short walks in the hall. Your diet will be slowly increased. The determination to increase your diet is based on the passage of gas through your rectum and increased bowel sounds.

Your hospital length of stay is individualized as appropriate for each patient but expect to be an inpatient for a minimum of 4 days after the day of surgery. You will be given the approval to shower prior to your discharge. The day of discharge, you will receive written instruction regarding medication, names of people to contact with questions and also get information on when your post-operative appointments will be scheduled. Your catheter will remain in for several weeks after surgery to allow the urethra to heal. Urology will determine when the catheter can be removed. You will see urology and have a urethrogram and / or scope when the catheter is removed. This is done on an outpatient basis.

### **What should I expect when I return home?**

Your thoughtful preparation of your home will certainly benefit you at this critical time in your recovery. As you probably know, hospitals are not conducive to rest/sleep. You will need to plan quiet days with naps and regular bedtimes. Let friends and family know in advance that this will be your plan. In addition to resting, you will be busy performing your personal care. It would be in your best interest to refrain from too many visitors or any outings.

It is not uncommon for there to be some swelling at the surgical site. No ice or tight fitting garments until Dr. Kuzon gives approval. Elevating the neo-phallus with a rolled up towel is fine to help decrease swelling.

At the time of surgery, a dressing and a plaster splint will be placed on the arm to protect the flap donor site. This initial dressing and splint will remain in place for one week. Once it is removed, a daily dressing change and a removable splint will be continued for several more weeks. The dressing on the skin graft donor site on the leg is also left in place for a minimum of a week.

During the early weeks of recovery, you will be making visits to Dr. Kuzon's office. As you will not be driving, you will need to make arrangement with others for your safe transportation. At these visits, Dr. Kuzon will be examining your surgical site and the healing process. He will be directing your personal care and advising you on increasing your activity. You can assist in this process

by meticulously following his instructions and providing clear information regarding your recovery. As wound healing is completed and your strength returns, your return to work will be considered. Dr. Kuzon will supply documentation for your employer regarding your return to work.

### **Who should I call if I have questions?**

- (734) 998-6022, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- After hours and on weekends, call Hospital Paging at (734) 936-6267 and ask for the Plastic Surgeon on call.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by the University of Michigan Health System (UMHS) for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by UMHS and for which UMHS does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Author: Erin Larowe

Reviewers: William Kuzon, MD; Patricia McKenzie, RN

Patient Education by [University of Michigan Health System](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License](#). Last Revised 10/2014