

Skin Cancer Reconstruction Post-Operative Instructions

What are my post-operative instructions?

- Have someone drive you home after surgery and help you at home for 1-2 days.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Follow a balanced diet.
- Constipation is a side effect of decreased activity, use of pain medicines, and dehydration. Be sure to walk, drink fluids regularly, and consider adding raw fruit to your diet.
- Take pain medication as prescribed. Do not take aspirin or any products containing aspirin unless approved by your surgeon.
- Do not drink alcohol, drive a car, or make important decisions when taking pain medications.
- Even when not taking pain medications, no alcohol for 3 weeks as it causes fluid retention.
- If you are taking vitamins with iron, resume these as tolerated.
- Do not smoke or be around a smoker. This can be the most significant cause of serious healing issues.
- Avoid prolonged exposure to the sun, especially between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.
- Wear wide-brimmed hat and long sleeves if you will be in the sun for an extended time.
- Apply sunscreen frequently.
- Examine your skin regularly.

What should my activity level be?

- Start walking as soon as possible, this helps to reduce swelling and

lowers the chance of blood clots.

- Do not drive until you are no longer taking any pain medications (narcotics).
- Unless stated on this form, discuss your time off work with your surgeon.

How do I take care of my incision?

- Avoid exposing scars to the sun for at least 12 months.
- Always use a strong sunblock, if sun exposure is unavoidable (SPF 30 or greater).
- Keep steri-strips on until they start to curl up on the ends, and then gently remove them.
- Keep incisions clean and inspect daily for signs of infection.

What will it look like?

Depending upon the type, size and location of the cancer, you may have a barely visible scar or a slightly larger, white scar or need a reconstructive procedure.

What follow-up care will I receive?

Have regular follow-up visits as scheduled by your doctor to ensure the cancer has not recurred.

When should I call my doctor?

- If you have increased swelling or bruising.
- If swelling and redness persist for 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, or vomiting.
- If you have an oral temperature over 100.4 degrees.

- If you have any yellowish or greenish drainage from the incisions or notice a foul odor.
- 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?

- (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.

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Author: Erin Larowe
Reviewers: David L. Brown, MD

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