

# Tissue Expansion Placement Post-Operative Instructions

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## What are my post-operative instructions?

- Do not have an MRI with your tissue expanders in place.
- Have someone drive you home after surgery and help you at home for 1-2 days.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Follow balanced diet.
- Decreased activity may promote constipation, so you may want to add more raw fruit to your diet, and be sure to increase fluid intake.
- Take pain medication as prescribed. Do not take aspirin or any products containing aspirin unless approved by your surgeon.
- Do not drink alcohol 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, as smoking delays healing and increases the risk of complications.
- Expansion usually starts 2-3 weeks after your surgery.

## Drains

- You may have surgical drains in place.
- Do not shower while drains are in place; you may shower 48 hours after drains have been removed.
- Drains will be removed when the 24 hour output is less than 30ml for 2 days.
- Your drains need to be out for at least a week before expansion is started (unless otherwise instructed by your surgeon).

- Expansion is not started any earlier than 3 weeks after surgery

### **How do I take care of my incision?**

- Avoid exposing scars to sun for at least 12 months.
- Always use a strong sunblock, if sun exposure is unavoidable (SPF 30 or greater).
- Keep steri-strips on. If your incision was closed with skin glue, it will slowly flake off over the first couple of weeks
- Keep incisions clean and inspect daily for signs of infection.

### **What should my activity level be?**

- Start walking as soon as possible, this helps to reduce swelling and lowers the chance of blood clots.
- Perform arm/shoulder range of motion exercises four times a day (as directed by your Plastic Surgeon).
- Avoid lifting anything over 5 pounds for 4-6 weeks.
- For 4 weeks after surgery, please avoid the following -
  - Physical work of any kind (house, yard, dishes, laundry)
  - Sports/working out (including treadmills)
  - Soaking in tubs, pools, whirlpools
- Employment activities can be resumed in 4-6 weeks (unless otherwise discussed with your surgeon).
- Do not wear a bra unless directed by your surgeon.
- Do not drive until 3 weeks after surgery.

### **What will it look like?**

- While the tissue is being expanded, a bulge will be created. Depending upon the location of the tissue expansion, the bulge may be considered desirable or unsightly.
- Following tissue expansion exchange, a more normal look should be restored.

## **When should I call my doctor?**

- If you have increased 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.
- 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.

## **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-operative Instructions:**

- After having surgery, it is expected you will experience some pain even with pain medication. This is a normal part of recovery.
- You will be provided a prescription for pain medicine that will last until your first return post-op visit.
- At your first post-op visit, your pain will be evaluated. The surgical team will manage your pain for the acute recovery phase.
- Acute pain management for major surgery is typically 6 to 12 weeks.
- Acute pain management for minor procedures is typically 7-10 days.
- 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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