

Instructions for after breast surgery (axilla node dissection and mastectomy)

1. You can shower as early as the first day after surgery. There is no need to cover the wound while showering. Please do not scrub or rub the wound. Do not soak in the tub, pool or hot tub for the first 3 weeks.
2. Avoid deodorant, powders, perfumes and creams.
3. Your wound has small tapes called steri strips covering it. They are usually left on for 10 to 14 days after surgery. It is okay if these come off in the shower and if they fall off sooner than the 10 to 14 days. The stitches will dissolve on their own.
4. The wound can be open to air. Daily dressings and tapes are unnecessary and may irritate the skin.
5. It is normal for the wound to look bruised. This should improve over the first few days. If there is redness, pain, fever or green or yellow discharge, call your surgeon's office or go to the Emergency Department.
6. It is important to start arm exercises as soon as the first day after surgery. Please follow the exercise pamphlet. Do not wait to start exercises until the drains are out or you may develop a stiff shoulder from lack of use.
7. You can walk, however you should avoid lifting and/or vigorous exercise.
8. The drain fluid will turn from red to pink to yellow/clear. Milk and strip the drains daily as clots will block the drain and fluid will collect in your wound and a collection or infection could occur. If needed, you will be shown how to do this. The drains are kept in place with stitches, which do not dissolve on their own. They will be removed when the drains are removed.
9. You may need home care for your wound and drain. If so, this will be arranged for you.
10. If you have any concerns, please call _____ at _____.
name number