



Breast Reduction Instructions

This handout provides information on how to prepare for your breast reduction operation and what to expect as you are healing after your operation. Please read the handout carefully and keep it handy. Feel free to ask questions at any time.

Important information about preparing for your breast reduction operation:

1. Do not take products containing aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), or Vitamin E pills for 10 days prior or for 1 week after your operation. Many medications contain these compounds which are known to prolong bleeding. It is safest to take only Tylenol for aches and pains prior to your operation. Do not drink red wine or smoke the night prior to your surgery.
2. Your prescriptions for pain and an antibiotic will be given to you ahead of time. You should fill these prior to surgery and have them available for when you arrive home from the hospital or office.
3. If you are having anesthesia, do not eat anything after 10:00 PM or drink anything after midnight. The morning of surgery you may brush your teeth and rinse out your mouth, but do not swallow any water.
4. Laboratory work may be needed for your procedure. You will be instructed where to have lab work done. An EKG may also be needed as per your age or cardiac history.
5. You will need to purchase a supportive bra to wear for 2 weeks after the operation. Purchase a bra that is the size you normally wear. A handout will be given to you for ordering this bra.
6. Please arrange for a friend or family member to stay with you for the first 24 to 48 hours following your surgery.
7. Be aware that you will not be able to fly for two weeks following your operation, so please plan accordingly.
8. In general, you will need at least 2 weeks off from work.

On the day of your operation:

1. Do not wear makeup, nail polish, contact lenses or jewelry on the day of your operation. Do not use hairspray, gel or mousse. Do not put any creams on your body.
2. Wear comfortable clothing that is easy to dress in and out of. Wear a shirt that zips or buttons down the front.
3. Bring your support bra to the hospital with you.

After your operation:

1. After your operation, you will awaken with bandages and your support bra covering your breasts. There will be 2 drains under the dressings that will be removed before you leave the hospital.
2. The bandages and the support bra will stay in place for 3 days. You may take a tub bath up to your waist 24 hours after your surgery. Keep the breast area dry.
3. After 3 days you may remove the bra and throw the bandages away. Keep the paper tapes in place. You can take a shower. Have someone assist you in the shower in case you feel faint. Keep the water pressure on your back and not directed toward your breasts.
4. After you shower, gently pat the breasts and the tapes dry with a towel. Put your support bra back on. This bra will be worn for 2 weeks. After 2 weeks, you can wear a soft cup bra.
5. The most common complaint after the operation is nausea, although this generally passes within 24-48 hours. It is important that you drink liquids frequently after your operation. Do not take your pain medication on an empty stomach as you may experience nausea and or vomiting. A stool softener (Colace) may be required to prevent constipation.
6. Use the pain medication as prescribed when you are feeling uncomfortable. Tylenol should be used for mild discomfort.
7. It will be at least 1 week before you can begin light exercise such as walking.
8. Heavy exercise, heavy lifting of more than 5 pounds should be avoided for 3 weeks.
9. You will be able to drive after 1 week. Be aware that pain medications may cause drowsiness and should not be used before driving.
10. Take prescribed antibiotic twice a day for 4 days with food.

What to expect as you are healing:

1. Your breasts will be slightly swollen.
2. Numbness in the breasts and nipple area is common and usually improves over a period of several weeks or months.
3. Gauze pads may be needed to pad under your bra for any drainage.
4. Your incisions may be raised, red, and feel hard for several months. This will subside.

Follow-up appointments:

1. Your first appointment will be one week after your operation to have the sutures removed.
2. Your second appointment will be three weeks after your operation.
3. A subsequent appointment is usually 3 months later, or as suggested by Dr. Gerstle

If you have any questions, increased swelling, a sudden onset of extreme pain, fever, redness, leg pain, or drainage, please call Dr. Gerstle @ (859) 285-0065.

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