

**CENTER FOR PLASTIC & COSMETIC SURGERY**  
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**IMPLANT BREAST RECONSTRUCTION**

You are about to undergo breast reconstruction procedure using an implant or tissue expander. The following is an instruction sheet to help guide you through your recovery. Doctor Fedele strives to educate each patient thoroughly about their procedure and what to expect during their recovery. The staff at the Center for Plastic and Cosmetic Surgery are here to help and provide a supportive environment in which to ask questions or concerns that might arise. Please review the following instruction sheet and write down any questions that you may have. Doctor Fedele and his staff want to make sure that you are comfortable with the procedure and have all of your questions answered.

PRE-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS:

- This procedure lasts approximately 1 to 1-1/2 hours. You will spend about 1 to 1-1/2 hours in the recovery room. You will likely stay overnight in the hospital. You will then be discharged the following morning when stable.
- You must have someone drive you home and stay with you during the first 24-hours following the discharge.
- Do not take aspirin or aspirin products (Ibuprofen, Vitamin-E or herbals) for three weeks prior to the surgery.
- If you are a smoker, you should stop smoking at least three weeks prior to the surgery and for three weeks after the surgery. Please note: Smoking increases your risk for infection, scarring, delayed healing or skin loss and wound healing problems as well as an increased risk of anesthesia.
- Doctor Fedele can have your prescriptions for you prior to your surgery so that you can get them filled before the day of your surgery. This will make it easier for you immediately following the surgery and save any running around to fill prescriptions after your surgery.

DAY OF SURGERY EXPECTATIONS:

- Discomfort after the surgery is controlled with pain medication and a muscle relaxant.
- Narcotic pain medications can sometimes cause constipation. An over-the-counter stool softener (Colace) is recommended if you are prone to this.
- Some nausea is normal in the first 24-48 hours following surgery. The surgery center can give you something prior to leaving. However, if you continue to experience nausea or vomiting, please contact the office to obtain a prescription for anti-nausea medication.
- You must wear a post-operative bra that will hold dressings in place. Do not wear an underwire bra or push-up for six to eight weeks. You may change from this surgical bra to a comfortable sports bra when you get home. The bra should fit fairly loosely.
- The white Band-Aid strips called steri-strips, along the incision, can remain in place until they peel off or until your first postoperative visit.
- If you are discharged from the hospital with your drains still in, you will need to record the amount that you empty approximately 3 times a day or when 1/3 full. Total output in cc's or ml's only totaled for each 24-hour period on Drainage Record Sheet. We will want to know this amount in order to remove the drains.
- The drainage can vary in color from yellowish to red and it is also normal to have fluid leak around the drains.

## RECOVERY EXPECTATIONS

### Week 1

- It is best to sleep on your back until the drains are removed or until the discomfort has decreased then you may begin laying on your side or stomach, usually around week 3 or 4.
- You can expect some decreased sensation on the chest wall from the mastectomy portion of the procedure. This may improve with time.
- Make an appointment with our office within the first week after surgery. At that time we may remove your drains if they are less than 30cc's in 24 hours. We will give you further instructions at that time.
- Once your drains are removed, fluid can leak from the drain holes. This can occur when walking or rolling over in bed and can saturate your clothes or linens. This is normal.
- You may shower 24 hours after your drains are removed. Do not tub bathe for 2 weeks.
- Each day, apply a small amount of antibiotic ointment (Neosporin, Bacitracin or Bactroban is suitable) to the drain holes.
- No driving, lifting or strenuous activity until instructed to do so by Dr. Fedele.

### Week 2 and Beyond

- Bruising and swelling can last for several weeks. The swelling may last up to 3 to 6 months.
- For tissue expansion, we will likely begin tissue expansion 2 to 3 weeks after the expander is placed. Tissue expansion can last from 2 to 6 months depending on ultimate size breast we are trying to achieve. Other factors such as chemotherapy and radiation therapy may effect the timing of the second stage of reconstruction with removal of the tissue expander.
- Walking is okay within the first 2 weeks. Exercise usually after 4 weeks.
- You may experience spasm type discomfort a muscle relaxant will be prescribed to help improve your comfort level.
- You can notice twinges of discomfort in the chest wall of the reconstructed side. This could last up to 6 to 12 months but this should improve.
- Scarring will continue to fade for up to 2 years and any unevenness in the skin, around the incision on the tissue expansion, will likely smooth out as expansion progresses.
- The tissue expanders may be slightly higher than their final position when the permanent implant is placed. Do not be alarmed if the implants are slightly high or slightly uneven.

## PRECAUTIONS

- If you experience any of the following, please call the office immediately and have the answering service contact Dr. Fedele: extreme pain, significant swelling, fever, chills, or a "hot-to-touch" sensation, significant redness.