



**Cosmetic Plastic
Surgery Institute**

Breast Reduction Postop Instructions

- 1. Position:** For at least the first week after surgery, try to sleep on your back. In order to avoid turning on your side, you may use a pillow on each side of you during sleep. If you are a restless sleeper, you may consider sleeping in a Lazy Boy chair. You should also use two pillows to elevate and support your head and back which will reduce the breast swelling.
- 2. Dressings:** At the end of surgery a Kerlex and Ace wrap dressings will be applied around your chest. These dressings are kept in place for two weeks after which you may start wearing an exercise bra (one which does not have an under wire).
- 3. Drains:** Rarely, if your surgeon feels that you are oozy (technical term for not easily clotting) he/she may use a drain. The drain will be attached to a bulb which when placed under suction will remove any extraneous bleeding in the breast pocket. When a drain is used, you will be taught how to use and monitor drain output. This drain is typically removed at 1 week or earlier when drain output is less than 25cc for 24-hour period.
- 4. Sutures:** Sutures are usually internal and not visible; instead, you will find a white tape glued to your incision sites. This white tape is called a SteriStrip and acts like an external stitch. For optimum results, this tape should be kept in place for four to six weeks. It has been estimated that at six weeks following surgery, your surgical incision line will have gained 80% of its over all strength! Keeping the tape much longer is less beneficial because even though 80% of the strength is gained within 6 weeks, complete healing does not occur for up to one year.
- 5. Exposure to sunlight:** Sunlight will cause all surgical incisions to darken. Surgical incisions are darkest from two to three months, after which they will fade gradually over one to two years. During the early postoperative period, protecting surgical incisions from the sunlight, will promote quicker fading. Even through clothes, a good deal of sunlight can reach the skin and cause damage. It is imperative that you wear a sunscreen with a skin-protection factor (SPF) of at least 20 when you are going to be in the sun.
- 6. Showering and Bathing:** You may shower 36 hours after surgery and only below the waist. One week following surgery you will be allowed to take down your Ace wrap and to have a full shower. The Small dressings (Steri-Strips) will remain in place when showering and do not have to be removed until they fall off on their own or are removed by your doctor at 4 to 6 weeks following surgery. To ensure that the Steri-Strips remain in place try not to direct the showerhead at the surgical incision sites.
- 7. Healing of sensory nerves:** When tolerable, tingling and burning indicate regrowth of the sensory nerves. If these sensations cause pain, gentle self-massage can help desensitize area of tenderness. If the pain gets progressively worse and intolerable, you should make sure you don't have an infection or blood accumulation called a hematoma; you should contact your doctor immediately.



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8. Asymmetry: The two breasts commonly heal quite differently. One breast may swell more, feel more uncomfortable, or have a different initial shape. After complete healing, they will look remarkably similar and natural. You must have patience, but if this causes concern, contact your doctor immediately.

9. Activities: Any type of strenuous activity can induce swelling and bleeding, especially during the first 10-14 days after surgery. In general, guide your activities by your discomfort – that is, if an activity hurts, do not do it. If your job keeps you sedentary, you may feel well enough to return to work within 7-10 days. If the swelling or discomfort increases, you have probably done too much too soon. **In general, you should avoid strenuous activities for at least 4 weeks following surgery.**

10. **Postoperative visits:** The doctor should examine you within the first week after surgery. At this visit, your doctor will unwrap your dressings and rewrap you with an Ace wrap. You will return to your surgeon's office at four weeks following surgery. At this one-month visit, your doctor will remove your Steri-Strips and allow you to return to full physical activity and wearing of normal undergarment/bra wear.

Pt Name: _____

Pt. Signature: _____

Date: _____