



# Checklist: Mastectomy Without Reconstruction or With Reconstruction Using a Tissue Expander

Follow your care team's instructions for getting ready for and recovering after surgery.

Read *About Your Mastectomy* ([www.msk.org/pe/mastectomy](http://www.msk.org/pe/mastectomy)) or *About Your Mastectomy for Men* ([www.msk.org/pe/mastectomy-men](http://www.msk.org/pe/mastectomy-men)). A member of your care team will give you a copy. You can also find them online.

## Getting ready for your surgery

### What to do

- Set up an MSK MyChart account if you haven't already. Visit [mskmychart.mskcc.org](http://mskmychart.mskcc.org) for instructions.
- Fill out a Health Care Proxy form. You can ask for a printed copy or visit [www.health.ny.gov/publications/1430.pdf](http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/1430.pdf) to find it online.
- Identify your caregiver.
- Arrange for someone to take you home after surgery.
- Follow your care team's instructions for taking medicines.

### What to buy

- Buy a 4% chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) solution antiseptic skin cleanser, such as Hibiclens®.
- Buy 325-milligram acetaminophen tablets, such as Tylenol® Regular Strength.

### Presurgical Testing (PST) appointment

- Bring a list of all the prescription and over-the-counter medicines you take.
- Bring any important medical notes or results from tests done outside of MSK. (If your MSK care team already has them, you don't need to bring them.)

# 1 day before your surgery

## Note the time of your surgery

- A staff member will call you between 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. They'll tell you what time to arrive for your surgery. If your surgery is on Monday, they'll call you on the Friday before.
- Call 212-639-5014 if you don't get a call by 7 p.m.

## Taking medicine

- Follow your care team's instructions for taking medicines.

## Showering

- Shower in the evening.
  - Wash your hair, face, and genital area as usual.
  - Wash from your neck to your feet with 4% CHG solution. Avoid your head and genital area.
  - Dry yourself with a clean towel. Do not use lotion, cream, deodorant, makeup, powder, perfume, or cologne afterward.

## Instructions for eating

**Important:** If you take a GLP-1 medicine, do not follow these instructions. Follow the instructions in *Eating and Drinking Before Your Surgery or Procedure When Taking GLP-1 Medicines* ([www.msk.org/pe/eat-drink-glp1](http://www.msk.org/pe/eat-drink-glp1)) instead.



**Stop eating at midnight (12 a.m.) the night before your surgery.** This includes hard candy and gum.

Your healthcare provider may have given you different instructions for when to stop eating. If so, follow their instructions.

# The day of your surgery

## Instructions for drinking

**Important:** If you take a GLP-1 medicine, do not follow these instructions. Follow the instructions in *Eating and Drinking Before Your Surgery or Procedure When Taking GLP-1 Medicines* ([www.msk.org/pe/eat-drink-glp1](http://www.msk.org/pe/eat-drink-glp1)) instead.

- **Between midnight (12 a.m.) and 2 hours before your arrival time, only drink the liquids on the list below. Do not eat or drink anything else.**
  - Water.
  - Clear apple juice, clear grape juice, or clear cranberry juice.
  - Gatorade or Powerade.
  - Black coffee or plain tea. It's OK to add sugar. Do not add anything else.
    - Do not add any amount of any type of milk or creamer. This includes plant-based milks and creamers.
    - Do not add flavored syrup.
- If you have diabetes, pay attention to the amount of sugar in your drinks. It will be easier to control your blood sugar levels if you include sugar-free, low-sugar, or no added sugar versions of these drinks.



**Stop drinking 2 hours before your arrival time.** This includes water.

Your healthcare provider may have given you different instructions for when to stop drinking. If so, follow their instructions.

## Taking medicine

- Only take the medicines your care team told you to take. Take them with a small sip of water.

## Things to remember

- If you use contact lenses, wear glasses instead.
- Take off any metal objects and jewelry, including body piercings.
- Leave valuable items at home.

## Showering

- Shower before your surgery. Follow the same steps you did the night before.
- Wear a button-down or loose-fitting top and flat, safe shoes for walking.
- Bring your Health Care Proxy form and other advance directives, if you've filled them out.

## In the hospital after surgery

### Learning to care for yourself at home

- Meet with your nurse to review:
  - How to manage your pain.
  - How to take care of your drain(s) and incision(s).
  - How to shower.
  - When you'll be able to drive.
- Review arm exercises to do at home.

### Getting ready for discharge

- Make sure you have a responsible care partner to take you home.

## At home

Remember to follow your care team's instructions while you're recovering after surgery.

### Taking medicine

- Take your medicines as directed and as needed.
- Do not drive or drink alcohol while you're taking prescription pain medicine.

### Caring for your drain(s)

- Empty your drain(s) in the morning and evening. Milk the tubing each time. Visit [www.msk.org/pe/jackson-pratt](http://www.msk.org/pe/jackson-pratt) for instructions.
- If you did not have reconstruction, follow your breast surgeon's instructions for when to call their office to schedule your drain removal.
- If you had reconstruction, follow your plastic surgeon's instructions for when to call their office to schedule your drain removal.

### Showering

- If you did not have reconstruction, shower 24 hours after your surgery.
- If you had reconstruction, follow your plastic surgeon's instructions.

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## Exercise and physical activity

- Follow the instructions in *Exercises After Your Mastectomy or Breast Reconstruction*. A member of your care team will give you a copy. You can also visit [www.msk.org/pe/exercises-mastectomy](http://www.msk.org/pe/exercises-mastectomy) to find it online.
- Do your arm exercises 3 times every day until you can move your arm as you did before surgery. After that, do them once every day.
- If you had reconstruction, do not lift objects heavier than 5 pounds (2.3 kilograms) until your care team tells you it's safe.

## Sexual activity

- You can start sexual activity when you feel ready.

## When to call your care team

Call your care team if:

- You have a fever above 100.4 °F (38 °C).
- The skin around your incision(s) is redder or warmer than usual.
- You have increased discomfort in the area of your surgery.
- There's drainage from your incision(s).
- Your arm or the area around your incision(s) is starting to swell or getting more swollen.
- You have trouble breathing.
- You have any questions or concerns.



## Contact information

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Nurse: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call.