Caring for Yourself After Your Breast Implant Surgery

This information will help you care for yourself after your breast implant surgery.

After Your Surgery

- You will have a gauze bandage covering your incision (surgical cut). This bandage will be held in place by your bra or clear tape.

- You may have a Jackson-Pratt® drain (JP drain) in place when you leave the hospital. This is a plastic drain that’s inserted in your chest to drain the fluid from your surgery. The drain is usually removed 1 to 2 weeks after your surgery. Your nurse will teach you how to care for it before you go home.
  - Your nurse will give you the resource Caring for Your Jackson-Pratt Drainage System or you can search for it on mskcc.org/pe

- You will get a prescription for pain medication and antibiotics.

- If you will be traveling by car, place a small pillow or towel between the seat belt and your reconstructed breast. The skin over your reconstructed breast is often thin and can easily be scraped which can lead to infection.

At Home

Caring for your chest

- If you have a bandage that is held in place by your bra, remove it and replace it with new one at least once a day until your follow-up appointment. At your follow-up appointment, your doctor or nurse will tell if you can stop.

- If you have a bandage that is held in place by a clear plastic dressing, don’t change it. Your doctor or nurse will change it at your appointment.
To create a natural fold under your breast, your doctor placed sutures (stitches) under your skin which you will not see. They will dissolve on their own and don’t need to be removed. These sutures may cause you to feel a pinching or pulling sensation, and can be painful. If you have any pain, take your pain medication.

For the first 48 hours after your surgery:

- You may have a slight fever. Your temperature could reach 101° F (38.3° C).
- The skin of your reconstructed breast may become pink or red.

These are not signs of infection. They are signs that your body is adjusting to the implant. Call your doctor if the redness or fever doesn’t get better 48 hours after your surgery or if your temperature gets higher than 101° F (38.3° C).

**Showering**

- Don’t shower or wet your bandage for the first 48 hours after surgery.
- You may shower 48 hours after your surgery if:
  - You do not have a JP drain or
  - You have a drain that is covered with a clear waterproof cover.
- If you have a JP drain and you don’t have a waterproof cover or if the cover has fallen off, you can shower 48 hours after your JP drain has been removed. You may shower from the waist down or take a sponge bath while you still have the drain.
- Avoid baths, hot tubs, and swimming pools for at least 6 weeks after your surgery.
- Speak with your doctor or nurse before you use deodorant, lotion, or cream anywhere near your incision.

**Clothing**

- Wear a soft supportive bra for 6 to 8 weeks after your surgery, even while sleeping. You may remove your bra when you bathe or shower.
- Don’t wear a bra that has underwire.
Medications

- Your doctor will give you medication to treat your pain as needed.
- Your doctor will give you an antibiotic. Take the medication as it is prescribed.

Restrictions on physical activity

You can resume most activities right after your surgery, but below are some exceptions.

- Don’t do any exercise that will tighten your chest muscles. If you have any questions, talk with your doctor or nurse.
- Don’t lift any objects heavier than 5 pounds (2.3 kilograms) for 4 to 6 weeks.
- Check with your doctor or nurse before starting heavy exercises, such as running, jogging, or lifting weights.

When you exercise, wear a soft and supportive bra.

Call Your Doctor or Nurse If You Have:

- A temperature of 101° F (38.3° C) or higher
- Redness, warmth, or increased pain or swelling in your breast area
- Shaking chills
- Shortness of breath
- Drainage or oozing from your incision

If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.