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PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# 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 Drain* ([www.mskcc.org/pe/caring\\_jackson\\_pratt](http://www.mskcc.org/pe/caring_jackson_pratt)) or you can search for it on [mskcc.org/pe](http://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 be scraped easily. This can lead to infection.

# At Home

## Caring for your chest

- If you have a bandage that's 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's held in place by a clear plastic bandage, you can remove the bandage 48 hours (2 days) after your surgery.
- To create a natural fold under your breast, your doctor placed sutures (stitches) under your skin that you won't 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 around your reconstructed breast may become pink or red.

These aren't signs of an infection. They're 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.
- Talk to your doctor about showering with your JP drain in place.
- Avoid baths, hot tubs, and swimming pools for at least 6 weeks after your surgery.
- Talk with your doctor or nurse before you use deodorant, lotion, or cream

anywhere near your incision.

## **Clothing**

- Wear a soft supportive bra for 6 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 antibiotic as it's prescribed.

## **Restrictions on physical activity**

You can resume most activities right after your surgery, but below are some things you should avoid:

- Don't do any exercise that will tighten your chest muscles. If you have any questions about this, 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 fever of 101° F (38.3° C) or higher
- Redness, warmth, or increased pain or swelling in your breast area
- Shaking chills
- Trouble breathing
- Drainage or oozing from your incision

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

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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