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### **Patient Instructions Following Breast Reduction**

1. Do not take aspirin, aspirin-containing products, Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), or vitamin E for two weeks before and after surgery.
2. Avoid smoking for two weeks before and after surgery.
3. You may be discharged home the same day of surgery. If observation is required, you will be admitted to the hospital overnight.
4. You will be placed in a post-operative bra immediately after surgery, and will wear it until drains are removed. After drains are removed you will wear your bra at all times, except while showering.
5. You will most likely be discharged with one drain per breast. You and your family will be taught how to empty the drain and record the amount of drainage after your discharge.
6. You will return to the plastic surgery clinic for drain removal approximately one to two days after surgery. If you are hospitalized overnight, it is possible that your drains will be removed before discharge.
7. You will be provided with medications both during your hospitalization and following discharge. To avoid an upset stomach, oral medications should be taken with food.
8. For the first few days following surgery, lie on your back as much as possible while resting.
9. Avoid excessive arm extension and reaching. Avoid heavy lifting until suture lines are healed (approximately three weeks).
10. Keep incisions dry for four to five days. You may take a tub bath, but must avoid getting incisions wet. You may take brief showers four to five days after surgery; gently dry your skin along the suture lines.
11. You can expect to feel tired during the first 10 to 14 days following surgery, so get adequate rest. You may be provided with an iron supplement. This should be taken twice daily, with food, for four weeks.
12. Avoid driving for seven to ten days after surgery.

13. Expect to be off work approximately three weeks; four to six weeks if your job entails strenuous physical activity.

14. Allow four to six weeks for most swelling to subside and healing to be completed. Breast shape and symmetry will continue to improve over subsequent months.

15. For concerns or problems such as bleeding, pain, swelling, or excess drainage, or to clarify follow-up appointments, contact the office.

### **Normal Symptoms After Breast Reduction Surgery:**

**Pain:** Begins to lessen 24-48 hours after surgery

**Moderate Swelling:** Will persist for three to four months

**Bleeding:** A small to moderate amount of bloody oozing along the suture line is normal for two to three days after surgery

**Bruising:** Expect moderate to severe bruising for two to three weeks with blue, green, yellow, and brown stages; this may travel down onto upper abdomen

**Scabs/crusting:** A small amount along incision lines is normal. Soak and remove with hydrogen peroxide, if necessary, after you remove Steri-Strips™

**Nipple Numbness:** Common initially, 85 percent of patients regain some nipple sensation within two years. If a free nipple graft was done, recovery of sensation is much less likely

**Skin loss:** About 50% of patients have some wound-healing problems to a lesser or greater degree with blistering, scabbing, and a small amount of skin loss

**Breast feeding ability:** Variable, not possible with free nipple grafting.

**Scarring:** Always occurs and may be significant.

### **Breast Exams**

Breast self exams and mammograms are somewhat more difficult to do.

Have a post-op baseline mammogram six to twelve months after breast reduction surgery.

It is very important you do breast self examination on a regular basis.

### ***Complications***

Call or come to the clinic from 9:00am-5:00pm, Monday-Friday or the Emergency Room when the clinic is closed as soon as possible if you experience any of the following:

1. Increasing swelling, redness, or pain of breasts.
2. Pus drainage from breasts.
3. Fever greater than 101.5 degrees when measured orally.

4. Excessive bleeding post-op (i.e., bandages become soaked with blood).
5. A nipple turns white or dark purple and stays that way more than half an hour.
6. Unrelenting pain in your calf
7. Shortness of breath.