



FRANCIS J. COLLINI, MD FACS

The Renaissance Center
for Plastic Surgery

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR BREAST REDUCTION PATIENTS

This instruction sheet will help guide you through the days after surgery and answer many of your questions. PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY AND COMPLETELY. Should any problems arise, please feel free to call me at any time of the day or night. I want you to be as comfortable as possible after this surgery.

DO'S

- For the first 48 hours after surgery, you should rest. You may get up to use the bathroom or eat, but you must avoid heavy lifting, pushing, sex, driving, housework, and any physical activity that may increase your blood pressure and heart rate during these first two days. AVOID LOTS OF VISITORS.
- Sleep on two pillows with your head elevated at all times. You may sleep in a recliner if desired. DO NOT SLEEP ON YOUR SIDE. A pillow under each arm may make you more comfortable. After the tapes are removed from the breasts (usually 7-10 days after the surgery), you may sleep on your side, but not your stomach for 4 weeks after surgery.
- On the night of surgery you may have sips of water, ice chips, 7UP, or ginger ale. If tolerated, you may have cola, juices, soup and gelatin, but avoid tea and coffee. Decaf tea and coffee are okay. Avoid greasy or spicy foods. On the day after surgery, you may resume your normal diet.
- Apply ice packs to the tops and sides of your breasts for 15 minutes on, 15 minutes off constantly *for the first 3 days after surgery*. You may discontinue the ice packs when you are ready to retire for the night and resume the ice packs when you awaken in the morning. Frozen peas in a clean sock work well if ice packs are not readily available. AVOID APPLYING ICE DIRECTLY TO THE SKIN OF THE BREASTS. THE ICE MUST BE IN AN ICE BAG.
- Do wear "button-down" or "zip-up" tops instead of pullovers for 3 weeks post-op.





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- Do take your pain medication as needed. Never take this medication on an empty stomach. Vitamin C 500mg taken twice a day may improve healing and is recommended for 2 to 4 weeks after surgery.
- We will provide you with a bra immediately after surgery is done. Leave this bra on continuously for three days after surgery. After seven to ten days you may remove your bra for changing or showering.
- You may return to work one week after surgery or after your first postoperative visit, providing your duties do not involve heavy lifting, pushing, pulling, or any form of strenuous arm activity. These activities will cause pain. Strenuous activity can be resumed 4 weeks after surgery.

DON'TS

- Do not take aspirin, Advil, Motrin, ibuprofen, garlic pills, vitamin E, antihistamines, alcohol (beer, wine, and spirits) or any other medication listed on the “Drugs to Avoid” handout for two weeks after surgery unless prescribed by or specifically approved by me. **Any of these medications can cause bleeding.**
- Do not lower your head excessively and avoid straining, coughing, or vomiting.
- DO NOT ELEVATE YOUR ARMS ABOVE YOUR HEAD FOR 14 to 21 DAYS AFTER SURGERY as this will cause pain and could open the incisions. It is normal to feel soreness in your chest muscles for 3 to 4 days after surgery. After one week, progressive gradual elevation of your arms above your head is permitted as tolerated.
- Do not resume vacuuming, sweeping, lifting laundry baskets, lifting bags of groceries, or doing other housework and yard activities that require using your arms for at least 2 or 3 weeks after surgery.
- Absolutely do NOT return to the gym, or participate in active sporting activities such as tennis, jogging, swimming, golf, bicycling, spin classes, and aerobics, for 4 to 6 weeks following surgery—or when given permission to do so by Dr. Collini.
- Do not smoke or be around a smoker for at least 2 weeks after surgery. Smoking or exposure to smoke can delay or prevent healing.
- Avoid pets such as dogs and cats for the first 2 weeks after surgery. Contact with them may increase your risk of infection.





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Do not get the dressing wet after surgery. Do not take a shower or bath for three days. You may sponge bathe or have a beautician wash your hair. After the outer dressings are removed, you can shower but you must cover the tape over your incisions with Saran wrap so they do not get wet. After your first post-op office visit or after discussion with Dr. Collini, you can get the incisions wet 7 to 10 days following surgery.

- Do not purchase bathing suits, expensive bras, or fitted tops for 8 to 12 weeks after surgery. It takes this long for the swelling to resolve and your final breast size to emerge.

IMPORTANT POSTOPERATIVE FACTS TO KNOW

- A small amount of bloody drainage is to be expected 3 to 5 days after the surgery. If the outer dressing becomes bloody, you may replace it with clean gauze pads but do not disturb the steristrips over the surgical incisions.
- You should NOT experience severe pain after this procedure, only moderate discomfort which is controlled by the pain medication prescribed. If you experience unrelenting pain and tightness after surgery, associated with one breast becoming noticeably larger than the other, IMMEDIATELY call (570) 674-6525 or (570) 760-8464 and speak to a nurse or Dr. Collini.
- Your breasts will feel hard immediately after surgery, due to swelling and tightness of the skin. Your breasts will soften as the swelling subsides. The breasts settle as the healing process nears completion. Expect to see gradual improvement in the shape and appearance of your breasts for 3 to 6 months. The results of this surgery can be spectacular, but you must be patient during the healing process.
- Most of the swelling and bruising develops on the sides of the breasts and outside chest area. This is frequently more noticeable on the second or third day after the surgery. Ice packs may help reduce this. It takes approximately 2 to 3 weeks for all the bruising to fade.
- Occasionally, one breast will be more sensitive than the other, and you may experience a heavy feeling. As settling takes place, this resolves. Also one nipple may be more sensitive than the other. This is normal and will stop as the swelling goes away.





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- It is not unusual to feel occasional sharp pains for several weeks following surgery. Not everyone experiences this, but it is a normal occurrence. These pains are caused by compression of the skin nerves by swelling, and they go away as the swelling subsides.
- Nipples might be hypersensitive for 3-4 weeks after surgery. Band-aids will help.

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT THE INCISIONS

- Ninety-eight percent of the stitches used to close your incisions are disappearing, dissolvable stitches. A few stitches at the T-junction are *not* absorbable and will require removal during a post-operative visit. Your incisions are covered by surgical tape and dressings after the surgery. *Do not remove these surgical dressings.* Keep them dry and clean. The outer dressings can be removed and replaced three days after surgery – but not the tapes. The tape may be removed during the first postoperative visit.
- Once the dressings are off the incisions, I recommend Avène Cicalfate topical treatment applications for 3-4 weeks until full healing has taken place. Cicalfate can be purchased at this office at your first postoperative visit.
- You may clean the incisions with mild soap and a warm water washcloth between applications of the Cicalfate before applying a new coat. Use only a thin film of the topical cream. Apply the Cicalfate until fully absorbed into the skin.
- Your incision may feel hard, knotty, and have a ridge for several weeks after surgery. This is normal and represents the normal healing process of the body. The scars always soften and settle over time, but this can take up to 2 years.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the office at (570) 674-6525.

