

# CHAD PURNELL M.D.

CRANIOFACIAL AND PLASTIC SURGERY

## Pre-and postoperative care instructions

### Tissue Expander Breast Reconstruction, Expander to implant exchange, or Revision of breast reconstruction

#### Before the Operation:

- Follow the instructions given to you by our scheduler regarding eating and drinking. Try as much as possible to show up early. If you are on tamoxifen, this should be stopped 1 month prior to surgery.

**Hospital Stay:** Usually, hospital stay after breast reconstruction with an implant is outpatient. If you are having a mastectomy and tissue expander placed, the typical stay is 1 night.

#### After the Operation:

- Incision care:
  - o **It is ok to shower the day after surgery.** Soap and water can run over the incisions and drains. Pat the incisions dry. Otherwise, no specific wound care is required. Do not wear an underwire bra or a tight sports type bra until cleared by Dr. Purnell (typically at 4 weeks after surgery). **Incisions for fat grafting may leak pink fluid for 1-2 days.** This is normal.
- Pain Control: For the first 2-3 days, it is usually easier to **schedule** non-opioid pain medications rather than waiting to see if you need them.
  - o You can take acetaminophen every 6 hours and ibuprofen (Motrin) every 6 hours, so you will get a medication every 3 hours. If this is not relieving the pain, you may add a dose of oxycodone.
  - o The vast majority of patients only require opioid medication for the first 2-3 days after fracture surgery. **Opioid medications can result in you being more sleepy, eating and drinking poorly, and can cause constipation.** They should only be used if necessary. Take opioids with food to decrease nausea.
- Other Medications: Use antibiotics as directed if you are given them.
- Diet: Eat a bland diet on the day of the operation until you are sure you will not be nauseated.
- Activity: No heavy lifting (greater than 10 lbs or the weight of a gallon of milk. This is typically for 4 weeks. It is ok to begin gentle stretching of your shoulders and arms after 2 weeks.
- Bathing: You may shower normally with soap and water. This can be done as early as the day after the operation. Do not immerse your incisions or drains under water in a bath, pool, or hot tub.
- Follow-up appointments: Patients are typically seen 2 weeks after the operation.

**Things to let us know about:**

- **Call the Office if:**
- You develop a temperature of **over 101 degrees** Fahrenheit (38.3 degrees Celsius) – it is not necessary to check temperatures after surgery unless you feel like something is wrong.
- You have **increasing redness, pain, weeping fluid, or swelling** at a surgical site. Swelling is normal for the first few days after surgery, but if swelling returns we would like to know. Rapid, painful swelling is never normal and we need to know about it immediately.
- If you have **severe pain that is not controlled by pain medication.**
- **If you have shortness of breath or chest pain, go to the Emergency Department.**
- **If you have any concerns or questions**, contact us. We are used to receiving questions from parents and can help you decide if something is normal or abnormal after surgery.

**Contact Information:****IF YOU ARE SEEN AT UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-CHICAGO:**

- Main Hospital: 312-996-7546
- Outpatient nurse: Melinda Love Valera 312-996-9313
- Surgery scheduling: 312-996-9313
- EMERGENCIES: 911