

Self-Care After Insertion of a Permanent Breast Implant

After Surgery

- You will have a gauze dressing on your incision line. This is held in place with a surgical bra.
- You may have a plastic drain near your incision line. It drains the fluid that normally develops after surgery. It may be removed on your first postoperative office visit. Your nurse will teach you how to care for the drain before you are discharged from the hospital.

Instructions for Self-Care after Discharge

- Keep the incision area dry.
- Change the dressing using dry sterile gauze at least once a day. Do it more often if needed.
- Wear a soft, supportive bra 24 hours a day for six to eight weeks after surgery.
- Do not wear underwire bras after you have the implant.
- Do not shower or wet the dressing for the first 48 hours after surgery. If you have a drain in place, do not take a full shower until 48 hours after the drain is removed. You may shower from the waist down while you still have the drain.
- If your surgeon did not insert a drain at the time of surgery, you may take a full shower 48 hours after your surgery.
- Do not soak in a pool, bath tub, hot tub, etc. until the incision line and drain sites are completely healed. This is to decrease your risk of incision line irritation and/or infection. It usually takes about six weeks for the incisions to heal completely.
- Do not apply deodorant, lotions, or creams on or near the incision line until it has healed.
- Your surgeon may use internal absorbable sutures to create the natural fold under your reconstructed breast. These do not need to be removed. You may feel a pinching or pulling sensation. Most women describe it more as discomfort than pain.
- Take the pain medicine your doctor prescribed if you need it.
- For the first 48 hours after your exchange surgery, you may have a slight fever. It can go up to 101° F (38.3° C). The skin of your reconstructed breast may become pink or red. This is not a sign of infection. Rather, your body is adjusting to the implant. Call your doctor's office if the redness or fever persists or if they do not stop or improve by 48 hours after surgery.
- You will be given antibiotics when you go home. Take them until your drains are removed.
- You may resume your usual activities, except for the following:
 - Do not do any exercise that will tighten or bulk your chest muscles.
 - Do not do vigorous exercise until your doctor tells you it is safe. This includes jogging and jumping.

- When you can resume vigorous exercise, you must wear a good, soft, supportive bra.
- When traveling long distance in a car, be sure that the safety belt is padded if it falls directly over the reconstructed breast. The skin over the reconstructed breast is often very thin and can easily be scraped. This can lead to infection.

Call Your Doctor or Nurse If You Develop:

- Redness, warmth, or increased pain over the breast implant.
- Any changes in your suture line such as drainage, oozing, or separation.
- Temperature of 101° F (38.3° C) or higher.
- Shaking chills.
- Sudden shortness of breath or any difficulty with breathing.
- Any type of infection anywhere in your body.

Doctor: _____ Telephone: _____

Nurse: _____ Telephone: _____

After 5 P.M. and on weekends, call 212-639-7900 and ask for the plastic surgery resident on call.

