

## **Postoperative Instructions – Breast Augmentation**

**Postop Assistance** – You are required to have a Responsible Adult with you for the first night at home. Do not walk unaccompanied if you feel faint.

**Food & Drink** – Eat a light meal when you get home (like soup and a drink) then gradually return to a full diet. Eating a large meal might cause nausea & vomiting.

### **Medications**

- You will be advised about medication use by Dr. Andrade and his staff, then the nurse in the Postop Recovery Room will review all of these medications and their dosing schedule with you and your Responsible Adult. Most medications can be restarted the day after your surgery but some medications (anxiety or sleep medications, antidepressants, etc) might interact with the pain medications you were prescribed, and cause excessive sedation or respiratory depression.
- All narcotic medications can cause constipation and/or nausea. We recommend purchasing over-the-counter (OTC) medications like Senokot for constipation and Gravol for nausea, but you may substitute them for other OTC meds if desired. If you do not have a bowel movement within 3 days postop you will need to use an OTC rectal suppository.

**Alcohol & Recreational Drugs** – These can interfere with your prescription narcotic pain medications, leading to excessive sedation. Do not drink alcohol or use recreational drugs while taking your prescribed medications.

**Driving** – Do not drive a vehicle or perform other tasks that require skill or judgement for at least 24 hours after surgery, while taking narcotic medication, or if you are having pain and do not feel you can concentrate.

**Sleep** – Avoid sleeping face down (with direct pressure on the breasts) for 6 weeks postoperatively. The majority of patients sleep face up, but if you are unable to sleep this way it is fine to sleep on your side, while minimizing pressure on the breasts.

**Wound Care** – Keep your postoperative dressing intact for at least 48 hours after surgery (longer if you wish provided it is clean and dry), then you may remove the dressing and shower. When you remove the outer dressing, you will notice a small tape (Steri-strip) adherent to the incision. Leave this tape alone when you shower, as it can get wet. Remove the tape after about 2 weeks, or sooner if it is no longer adherent.

**Showering** – As mentioned above, you may shower as early as 2 days after surgery if you wish. Never soak in a bathtub, hot tub, or swimming pool for at least several weeks, until your incisions are fully healed with no drainage or scabs.

**Ice Packs** – You may apply cool packs to the chest area to help reduce swelling and discomfort if you wish. Apply and remove every 20 minutes to avoid frostbite.

**Surgical Bra** – This can be worn much of the time for 4-6 weeks to provide some support and compression to help with swelling. If you find the bra uncomfortable, you can remove it for periods of time or use your own sports bra. Avoid underwire bras for 4-6 weeks as they can irritate your incision.

**Bandeau** – This strap is given to patients who have implants placed in a pocket behind the muscle, since muscle spasm can cause the implants to temporarily sit high on the chest (it is not required if the implants are in a pocket in front of the muscle). The bandeau can be worn as tolerated for several weeks to help the implants to settle. If it is causing pain or skin irritation it can be removed. The implants will drop over time even if the bandeau is not used.

**Activity & Exercise** – It is ok to do all light activities of daily living right after surgery, such as personal care, making meals, etc. You may occasionally reach overhead but avoid repetitive tasks above the shoulder for at least 2-3 weeks. Avoid rigorous exercise or direct pressure to the breasts for 6 weeks after surgery

**Sexual Intercourse** – You may resume sexual intercourse when it is comfortable to do so, but avoid direct pressure to the breasts for 6 weeks. The surgical incision must be kept clean and never touched with unwashed hands until it is fully healed (typically at least 2-3 weeks).

**Breast Massage** – Gentle breast massage for comfort is acceptable. You do not need to perform “displacement exercises” which involve vigorously moving the implants around, as there is no convincing benefit.

**Scar Care** – We provide a sample of scar gel to start you off with a good scar treatment protocol. At around 2-3 weeks postop, once your Steri-Strips have been removed from the incision, you can apply the scar gel daily and gently massage the scar. Some patients prefer to purchase and use their own silicone strips, which are an excellent alternative.

**Sun Tanning** – Avoid direct exposure to the scar for at least 6 months by wearing a garment or applying high SPF sun tan lotion.

### **Monitoring for Complications**

- A very uncommon complication that can occur after surgery is a blood clot in the leg called deep vein thrombosis (**DVT**) that can dislodge and go to the lungs, causing pulmonary embolism (PE). If you develop one-sided calf pain and swelling, chest pain when taking a deep breath, or shortness of breath you should go to the emergency department for assessment. Note that some chest/breast pressure, tightness and pain are expected after breast augmentation surgery but this typically improves within several days after surgery.
- Contact us if one breast becomes much more painful and swollen than the other (possible hematoma), or if you have signs of infection like breast redness, wound discharge, or fever.
- Inform our office if you require treatment at a hospital emergency department for any reason within 10 days after surgery.

### **Frequently-Asked Questions:**

***When will the swelling go down?*** – Swelling gradually resolves over 6 weeks but the implants may feel firm for many months.

***My implants are sitting high on my chest, is that normal?*** – In the early stages of healing it is not uncommon for the implants to sit high on the chest, and for the lower breast tissue to feel loose and soft in comparison. The implants will drop and settle, a process that takes months and sometimes up to a year.

***When can I return to work?*** – Please discuss your exact job with Dr. Andrade so he can make specific recommendations. Most patients return to light work within a week. For jobs that involve lifting greater than 20 pounds (roughly 10kg) or that require a lot of reaching or overhead work, we advise modified duties for 6 weeks.

***Is breast augmentation painful?*** – The majority of patients describe a sensation of pressure or tightness, rather than significant pain. These patients just take occasional Tylenol (acetaminophen) or other non-narcotic pain medications like Celebrex (celecoxib). However, some patients will require a narcotic pain medication like Dilaudid (hydromorphone) for several days. It is not uncommon to get occasional, very brief pain sensations for several months postoperatively. This may be due to nerve regeneration.