

TISSUE EXPANDER

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Drain Care

- Keep the bulbs on continuous suction (bulbs squeezed flat).
- Empty drains every 12 hours.
- Record the amount of fluid on your drain log, and bring your log your post-op visit.
- If there is more than 100 mL (a full bulb) over a 2 hour period, please call the office immediately.
- You may strip the drains with clean hands (wash with soap and water) if clots form. Instructions on how to strip the drain tube can be found on the drain guide.

Bathing

- You may shower once all drains have been removed, unless instructed otherwise by your surgeon. **No baths.**
- Once cleared by your MD to shower, remove compression and dressings **except the steri-strips/tape** over incision(s).
- Some areas may bleed slightly — this is normal and should subside quickly when dry.

Activity

- Walk every hour while awake to promote adequate circulation to your heart and lungs.
- Do not lift more than 10 lbs (or more than a gallon of milk) and avoid strenuous activity. Your provider will advise when you are able to increase your activity at your post-op appointment.
- Do not swim, use hot tubs, tub bathe, or submerge your wounds in water until fully healed —typically 4-6 weeks.

Diet

- Slowly resume your normal diet as tolerated.
- Pain meds and anesthesia may cause constipation. Be prepared with miralax and colace.
- Incorporate high protein foods into your diet to promote healing.
- Stay hydrated.

Wound Care/Dressings

- Apply a small amount of gauze over incisions if they are weeping fluid. **Always leave the steri-strips/tape in place.**
- Your surgical area may have temporary numbness.
- Do not use heating pads or cold packs on the surgical area.
- Most stitches are dissolvable and do not require removal. Stitch removal, if needed, will be assessed at your 2-3 week post-op appointment.

Medications

- Take all medications as prescribed by your physician.
- Pain medication will reduce discomfort but may not eliminate pain completely.
- Do not exceed prescribed doses.
- You may take acetaminophen (Tylenol) for mild pain, but do not take it in addition to prescription pain medication unless approved (many prescriptions already contain Tylenol).
- Avoid aspirin and NSAIDs (Advil, Motrin, Ibuprofen) for 72 hours after surgery, as they may increase bleeding risk.

Call Promptly If You Experience...

- Significant swelling or swelling on only one side
- Shortness of breath, calf pain or soreness
- Excessive bleeding (some drainage is normal)
- Fever greater than 100.4°F (38°C)
- Redness or warmth around the incision
- Changes in drainage (thick, yellow, green, bright red), a foul odor, or a sudden increase in drainage
- Severe pain that is not relieved by medication
- If you believe you are having a reaction to a medication