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## Patient Instructions for DIEP Breast Reconstruction

### ***Before Surgery***

1. No vitamins or hormones are necessary before or after surgery. Please hold unusual supplements for 2 weeks.
2. Shower or bathe the night before surgery. Do not use deodorant on the morning of your surgery. Do not wear any makeup, jewelry, or contact lenses on the day of your procedure.
3. Please do not eat or drink anything (including water) after **midnight** of the night before surgery. You may brush your teeth and rinse with water and/or mouthwash. Prescription medications can be taken the morning of surgery with a sip of water.
4. Please stop tamoxifen 2 weeks in advance of surgery, and Ozempic or similar medications 1 week in advance.
5. You will be referred to physical therapy for a “pre-hab” visit before your surgery to prepare, and you can resume therapy 5 weeks after surgery.
6. You will need the following items after surgery, so considering purchasing/picking up in advance:
  - Prescriptions filled
  - Bacitracin ointment, gauze, and/or ABD pads
  - Disposable measuring cup or medicine cup (for drain outputs)
  - Front opening shirts/robes
  - Front opening bra, no underwires
  - Bathrobe belt or lanyard to pin JP drains to while showering
  - Drain holder pouch/belt or mastectomy shirt (Amazon)
  - Abdominal binder (also check Amazon)
  - Pillows/cushions for sleeping on back with flexed stomachYou may wish to bring some ‘comfort items’ to the hospital.

### ***In the Hospital***

1. Day of Surgery: You will need to arrive at the hospital between 5:30 and 6 am. Generally, the surgery is complete at “dinner time,” but family/friends will not be able to visit for about 2 hrs afterward. After surgery, the first night in the hospital you will be on bedrest. Your goal is to relax, lay still, and let your body recover. You will have monitors, drains, and a catheter in your bladder. The nursing and physician team will check your free flaps every hour to check for in-flow and out-flow. You will be allowed medications but nothing to eat or drink. Take Valium if you have pain or cramping in the abdomen before asking for narcotics.
2. Post-Operative Day 1: I will see you first thing in the morning. Assuming all is well, you will be allowed to drink clear liquids and be out of bed to a chair in the morning. The catheter will be removed and you will void on your own. By late afternoon, you may be advanced to a regular diet for dinner and ambulate around your room.
3. Post-Operative Day 2: You will ambulate in a flexed position with a binder low and snug over the hips and a supportive bra. Flap checks will be less frequent (every 2 hrs). You will be discharged home later in the day. You will already have picked up your prescriptions; take them as prescribed. You should be familiar with what your reconstructed breast(s) look like and what signs to look for at home. You are still a vital part of the recovery process! Any external monitoring devices will be removed, but you will still have drains to manage.

### ***After Surgery, at home***

1. You must have a responsible adult to escort you home and stay with you after discharge.
2. **MEDICATIONS:** You will have “standing” and “as needed” medications prescribed. For “standing”: Take the antibiotics (every day for 7 days) and ketorolac (Toradol) as prescribed. After you complete 5 days of ketorolac, take 81 mg of aspirin per day for 1 month. For “as needed”: Diazepam (Valium) is the best medication for the first few days if you have pain and soreness in the abdomen. Narcotic medication (acetaminophen/oxycodone [Percocet]) will be provided for additional pain control as needed. You may switch to acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil) when the pain lessens. Finally, over the counter stool softeners such as Colace and Senna should be used for 10-14 days or until you have regular bowel movements.
3. **DIET:** Eat light healthy meals. If not needed, minimize **caffeine** or caffeinated beverages (coffee, tea, or cola) until 10 days after surgery.
4. **DRAINS:** Empty and record the JP drainage at least twice daily after discharge on the provided sheet. Bring the recorded drain amounts to the office so that I can review them. Drains are generally removed when the total 24-hr output is 30 cc or less for two days in a row. Some of the drains typically come out at the first post-op visit 1 week after surgery; the rest are removed when ready, but no longer than 4 weeks.
5. **ACTIVITY:** Rest at home the first few days following surgery. Do not be sedentary at home or in bed. Get up, walk around and sit in a comfortable chair or the couch. You should stand slightly hunched over at the waist to avoid stress on the abdominal incision. Do not stand erect until you feel it loosen up, approximately 4 weeks. Sleep on your back with a few pillows or a wedge to elevate your shoulder blades and/or knees. Do not sleep on your breasts or sides. Stairs are fine, just take your time. Do not lift anything heavier than a gallon of milk (about 8 lbs), and avoid reaching above shoulder level. Be active but do not break a sweat in your activities.
6. **CLOTHING:** You should wear the surgical bra or a sports bra and the abdominal binder continuously during the first four weeks. You may remove them to sleep at night if properly positioned. Keep the binder low, above and below the incision, “like a mini-skirt, not a tube top.”
7. **BATHING:** Showers are permitted the day of discharge. The drains and the incision lines can get wet in the shower. Do not take a bath or go in a hot tub. Pin the drains to a bathrobe belt or lanyard so that the drains do not dangle from your skin while in the shower.
8. **PERSONAL HYGIENE:** Shaving and deodorant under the arms is permitted 7 days after surgery unless your incision is in your underarm area. If your incision is in your underarm area, you may apply deodorant 10 days after surgery and resume shaving in a gentle manner on the 14<sup>th</sup> postoperative day.
9. You will have surgical glue on your breasts and steristrips on the abdomen covering the incisions. Glue or steristrips that peel can be trimmed, and usually all dressings are removed at about 1 month. You may begin scar massage twice daily with any medical grade silicone scar gel or tape at 6 weeks on healed incisions.
10. Bruising and swelling are a normal part of the recovery process. It is not unusual for the breasts to be swollen slightly differently on each side. Bruising will usually resolve within three weeks. If there is a sudden increase in swelling or pain or significant increase in bruising or change of color of the breast skin please notify me immediately.
11. Return to sedentary work and driving is permitted 2 weeks after surgery as long as you are not taking narcotic pain medication and can respond to traffic.
12. Low impact activities may be gradually resumed starting 6 weeks after surgery. With all activities, start slowly at first, and only increase your level as you feel comfortable and pain free. You will need a very snug supportive sports bra if you return to aerobic activity.
13. For routine questions, call the office (717-316-8322) weekdays 9:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.  
For emergencies after business hours, call any time using my cell phone or the office phone number.

**Day 1/DATE:** Amount Emptied in mL

TIME	Drain #1	Drain #2	Drain #3	Drain #4
am				
am/pm				
pm				
DAILY TOTAL:				

**Day 6/DATE:** Amount Emptied in mL

TIME	Drain #1	Drain #2	Drain #3	Drain #4
am				
am/pm				
pm				
DAILY TOTAL:				

**Day 2/DATE:** Amount Emptied in mL

TIME	Drain #1	Drain #2	Drain #3	Drain #4
am				
am/pm				
pm				
DAILY TOTAL:				

**Day 7/DATE:** Amount Emptied in mL

TIME	Drain #1	Drain #2	Drain #3	Drain #4
am				
am/pm				
pm				
DAILY TOTAL:				

**Day 3/DATE:** Amount Emptied in mL

TIME	Drain #1	Drain #2	Drain #3	Drain #4
am				
am/pm				
pm				
DAILY TOTAL:				

**Day 8/DATE:** Amount Emptied in mL

TIME	Drain #1	Drain #2	Drain #3	Drain #4
am				
am/pm				
pm				
DAILY TOTAL:				

**Day 4/DATE:** Amount Emptied in mL

TIME	Drain #1	Drain #2	Drain #3	Drain #4
am				
am/pm				
pm				
DAILY TOTAL:				

**Day 9/DATE:** Amount Emptied in mL

TIME	Drain #1	Drain #2	Drain #3	Drain #4
am				
am/pm				
pm				
DAILY TOTAL:				

**Day 5/DATE:** Amount Emptied in mL

TIME	Drain #1	Drain #2	Drain #3	Drain #4
am				
am/pm				
pm				
DAILY TOTAL:				

**Day 10/DATE:** Amount Emptied in mL

TIME	Drain #1	Drain #2	Drain #3	Drain #4
am				
am/pm				
pm				
DAILY TOTAL:				

**DAY 11/DATE:** Amount Emptied in mL

TIME	Drain #1	Drain #2	Drain #3	Drain #4
am				
am/pm				
pm				
DAILY TOTAL:				

**Day 16/DATE:** Amount Emptied in mL

TIME	Drain #1	Drain #2	Drain #3	Drain #4
am				
am/pm				
pm				
DAILY TOTAL:				

**Day 12/DATE:** Amount Emptied in mL

TIME	Drain #1	Drain #2	Drain #3	Drain #4
am				
am/pm				
pm				
DAILY TOTAL:				

**Day 17/DATE:** Amount Emptied in mL

TIME	Drain #1	Drain #2	Drain #3	Drain #4
am				
am/pm				
pm				
DAILY TOTAL:				

**Day 13/DATE:** Amount Emptied in mL

TIME	Drain #1	Drain #2	Drain #3	Drain #4
am				
am/pm				
pm				
DAILY TOTAL:				

**Day 18/DATE:** Amount Emptied in mL

TIME	Drain #1	Drain #2	Drain #3	Drain #4
am				
am/pm				
pm				
DAILY TOTAL:				

**Day 14/DATE:** Amount Emptied in mL

TIME	Drain #1	Drain #2	Drain #3	Drain #4
am				
am/pm				
pm				
DAILY TOTAL:				

**Day 19/DATE:** Amount Emptied in mL

TIME	Drain #1	Drain #2	Drain #3	Drain #4
am				
am/pm				
pm				
DAILY TOTAL:				

**Day 15/DATE:** Amount Emptied in mL

TIME	Drain #1	Drain #2	Drain #3	Drain #4
am				
am/pm				
pm				
DAILY TOTAL:				

**Day 20/DATE:** Amount Emptied in mL

TIME	Drain #1	Drain #2	Drain #3	Drain #4
am				
am/pm				
pm				
DAILY TOTAL:				