

## POST-SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS: NIPPLE AND AREOLA REVISION

Once your surgery is completed, you must follow all the instructions given to you in order to heal properly and have a good outcome.

The following instructions are your obligation. Use this as a checklist of progress as you heal. Included are normal post-surgical experiences and key health considerations that may be a cause of concern.

### TYPICAL POST-OPERATIVE SYMPTOMS

Typical symptoms of breast surgery and signs to watch for following nipple and areola revision include the following:

**Tingling, burning, or intermittent shooting pain:** These are normal experiences as the skin, tissues and sensory nerves heal. Pain medication and muscle relaxants will help you cope with any discomfort. **Consistent sharp pain should be reported to our office immediately.** You may also feel minor discomfort at the graft donor site, if you have had a nipple graft.

**Hypersensitivity of nipples or lack of sensitivity:** This is normal and will gradually resolve over time. You may also experience a small amount of fluid or milk seeping through the nipples. **If this becomes painful or excessive notify our office immediately.**

**Shiny skin or any itchy feeling:** Swelling can cause the breast's skin to appear shiny. As the healing process advances, you may also find a mild to severe itchy feeling of the breasts or at any nipple graft donor site. An antihistamine like Benadryl can help to alleviate severe, constant itchiness. **If the skin becomes red and hot to the touch, contact our office immediately.**

**Asymmetry, the breasts look different, or heal differently:** Breasts may look or feel quite different from one another in the days following surgery. This is normal; no two breasts are perfectly symmetrical in nature or following surgery.

### **CALL THE OFFICE IMMEDIATELY IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:**

- A high fever, (over 101°) severe nausea and vomiting, continued dizziness or incoherent behavior, such as hallucinations.
- Any pain that cannot be controlled by your pain medication.
- Bright red skin that is hot to the touch.
- Excessive bleeding or fluid seeping through the incisions.
- A severely misshapen breast or bruising that is localized to one breast or region of the chest.

To alleviate any discomfort, and to reduce swelling, you may apply cool, not cold compresses to the breasts or any nipple graft site. Crushed ice or ice packs must be wrapped in a towel before being applied to the skin. Do not apply ice or anything frozen directly to the skin. Apply cool compresses, for no longer than 20-minute intervals.

### DAY OF SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS

After surgery, you will only be released to the care of a responsible adult. All of these instructions must be clear to the adult who will monitor your health and support you, around the clock in the first 24 hours following surgery.

**Rest, but not bed rest.** While rest is important in the early stages of healing, equally important is that you are ambulatory, meaning that you are walking under your own strength. Spend 10 minutes every 2 hours engaged in light walking indoors as you recover.

**Recline, do not lie down.** This will be more comfortable for you, and can reduce swelling. Always keep your head elevated. Do not bend forward or over.

**Good nutrition.** Fluids are critical following surgery. Stick to non-carbonated, non-alcoholic, caffeine-free and green tea-free beverages including fruit juices and water, milk and yogurt drinks. You must consume at least 8 ounces of fluid every 2 hours. Stick with soft, bland, nutritious food for the first 24 hours.

**Take all medication, exactly as prescribed.** If you have a pain pump, follow the instructions specifically for your pain pump.

**Change your incision dressings after 24 hours.** Your incisions will seep fluid and some blood for a short time after surgery. Keep dressings clean and dry. A cotton swab with peroxide is appropriate for cleansing incisions. Do not remove any steri-strips even if they are over stitches. Apply anti-bacterial ointment over the steri-strips. **Replace any compression garments.**

**Wear your compression or elastic wraps around the clock.** Follow the instructions specifically removing any compression wraps only to cleanse your incision or to empty any drains.

**DO NOT SMOKE.** Smoking can greatly impair your safety prior to surgery and your ability to heal following surgery. You must not smoke.

**Relax.** Do not engage in any stressful activities. Do not lift, push, or pull anything.

During this time you will progress as each day passes. Ease into your daily activities. You will receive clearance to begin driving or

return to work at your post-operative visit.

- **Continue to cleanse wounds as directed; you may shower.** Take a warm, not hot shower. Do not take a bath. Limit your shower to 10 minutes. Do not remove any steri-strips. Do not rub your incisions. Apply a fragrance free moisturizer to the surrounding skin, however not on your incisions.
- **Take antibiotic medications and supplements as directed.** Take pain medication and muscle relaxants only as needed. You may wish to switch from prescriptive pain medication to acetaminophen or ibuprofen.
- **Continue to wear your elastic wraps or compression garment around the clock.**
- **Do not resume any exercise other than regular walking.** Walking is essential every day to prevent the formation of blood clots.
- **No sun exposure.** If you plan to go outdoors for any reason, use sun protection including wearing protective clothing. Avoid any direct sun exposure.
- **Maintain a healthy diet. DO NOT SMOKE. DO NOT CONSUME ALCOHOL.**

### ONE TO FOUR WEEKS FOLLOWING SURGERY

As you resume your normal daily activities, you must continue proper care and healing.

- **Continue your wound care as directed.**
- **Refrain from weight-bearing exercise.** You may begin range of motion exercises but not with any weight, pressure or resistance of any kind. Continue walking. A daily, brisk 20-minute walk is recommended.
- **DO NOT SMOKE.** While incisions may have healed, smoking deprives your body of necessary oxygen that can result in poorly healed, wide, raised scars.
- **Continue to wear your elastic wrap or compression garment as directed.** This is essential for your skin to conform to new contours. If your skin does not conform, revision procedures to reduce excess skin may be recommended.
- **Practice good sun protection.** Do not expose skin in regions treated to direct sunlight. If you are outdoors, apply at least an SPF 30 to the treated region at least 30 minutes prior to sun exposure and wear protective clothing. The skin in areas treated are highly susceptible to sunburn or the formation of irregular, darkened pigmentation.

### SIX WEEKS FOLLOWING SURGERY

Healing will progress and your body settles into a more final shape and position.

- **You may ease into your regular fitness routine.** However realize that your body may require some time to return to previous strength.
- **Discomfort or tightness and tingling of the skin will resolve.**
- **No need to resume smoking.** You have now gone 10 weeks (4 weeks prior to surgery and 6 weeks following) without a cigarette. For your long-term health, there is no need to resume smoking.

### YOUR FIRST YEAR

- **Continue healthy nutrition, fitness and sun protection.**
- **Your scars will continue to refine.** If they become raised, red or thickened, or appear to widen, contact our office. Early intervention is important to achieving well-healed scars. Scars are generally refined to fine incision lines one year after surgery.
- **A one-year post surgery follow-up is recommended.** However you may call our office at any time with your concerns or for needed follow-up.

**Your body will change with age.** The appearance of your body will change too. Although the outcomes of nipple and areola surgery are generally permanent, any significant weight gain or loss, pregnancy as well as the normal influences of aging can cause changes to your appearance. You may wish to undergo revision surgery at a later date to help maintain your appearance throughout life. Contact our office with any of your questions or concerns, at any time.

**I have read and understand all of the above instructions. I understand that following these instructions is solely my responsibility. I understand that it is also my responsibility to ask Dr. Castor or his staff any questions I have related to these instructions or about my procedure, health and healing.**