**POST OPERATIVE CHECKLIST**

**Diet**

- € Regular
- € Other ____________________
- € Iron Supplement

**Drain Care**

You will have 1 or more drains in place when leaving the hospital. The nurses will teach you and your escort how to care for the drains. Learn how to strip (or *milk*) the drain 1 to 2 times a day to help keep it open. Empty the drains as needed whenever they are one-third to one-half full. Remember to squeeze the air out of the collection bulb before you re-insert the stopper. **If the drain is full of air and looks like a hand grenade, it is not working.** Please record how much comes out of each drain every day. If necessary, we will arrange a home health nurse to help you with the drain care.

Please call your doctor when the drainage is less than 30cc (or 1 ounce) a day from the drain for two consecutive days. You can expect to have the drain(s) for 1 to 3 weeks.

- € Apply an over-the-counter antibiotic ointment to your drain sites before bed and after showering.
- € Jackson Pratt drain teaching completed
- € Measuring cup and drainage chart given to patient
- € No Visiting Nurse Needed
- € Visiting Nurse Arranged___________________ (agency, phone number)

**Shower**

_In some cases you will be told not to shower until the drains are removed._

Most of the time, it is OK to shower after 48 hours. You may lightly shower with...
your back to the water and to allow warm water to run over the incisions. Use a gentle soap such as Johnson and Johnsons or Dove, and do not scrub the wound. Avoid having the drain(s) pull against your skin while showering by supporting them. Pat your incisions dry after the shower. You may be asked to cover them with a fresh dressing. Ask for a prescription for a post-op camisole which can be purchased from the Boutique in the lobby of the Smilow Cancer Center in advance of your surgery. It will have a zip-up front and pockets for the drains.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>€ No Shower</th>
<th>€ Shower in 48 hours</th>
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Dressing needed: € yes € no

### Wound care

In some cases you will be instructed to leave the original dressing in place.

If you are told to change the dressing, keep your incision covered for 48 hours after surgery. After 48 hours, you may remove the clear bandage and gauze. Do not remove the paper strips directly on the skin. If allowed to shower, it is okay to get the paper strips wet in the shower and then pat them dry and leave them open to air. Leave these strips in place for at least 10 days. Sometimes the plastic surgeon will request Bacitracin, Xeroform, or Silvadene be placed on your wounds to moisturize them or prevent infection. Follow the instructions as given by your Plastic Surgeon. If you have flaps, monitor them for changes in color, temperature, drainage or appearance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>€ Do Not Remove Wound Dressing</th>
<th>€ Remove dressing after 48 hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>€ Apply Bacitracin to __________ every_______ hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>€ Apply Silvadene to __________ every_______ hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>€ Apply Xeroform to __________ every_______ hours</td>
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### Pain Control

Tylenol or a prescribed pain medication may be used every 4 to 6 hours as needed for pain. **Do not take both Tylenol and the pain killer together.** Valium 5 mg is frequently given after breast reconstructive surgery for muscle spasms and can be taken every 6 to 8 hours. Alternate the valium with the narcotic pain medication since the valium is often the more effective way to control the discomfort. Ibuprofen can be used to supplement the pain medications and decrease the dose of the narcotic if you tolerate it. **Remember to take a stool softener such as Colace,**
Senokot or Milk of Magnesia to avoid constipation while taking narcotic pain medications.

€ Vicodin       € Percocet       € Tylenol with Codeine
€ Valium       € Generic allowed
€ Other __________________________

Antibiotics

If you have had a breast reconstruction you will usually continue taking your antibiotics until the drains are removed. If you have not had a reconstruction, your antibiotics will be finished during your hospital stay.

€ Antibiotics, name and dosing: ______________________________
€ No antibiotics needed

Driving

Do not drive if you are taking a prescribed narcotic for pain, or the valium.

Do not drive until your drains are removed. You may drive only when you are not experiencing pain with movement of your arms and upper body. If you had a complete lymph node removal, or a complicated flap reconstruction, this may be 2-3 weeks after surgery.

Exercise

Please do not begin any vigorous exercises until your drains are removed, since increased activity may increase the fluid drainage and delay the removal of the drains. Walking and stair climbing are fine and strongly encouraged. You may not do any heavy lifting (greater than 5 pounds), or reaching over your head until your post-op appointment if you had a breast reconstruction. Use common sense in terms of your activity level and don’t be surprised if you need to take naps during your first weeks of recovery. See the section in your handbook on post operative exercises.

Bra
You may wear the post operative camisole or a surgical bra, a camisole with an elastic shelf or nothing. DO NOT WEAR an underwire bra or sports bra until you are told it is OK to do so.

**When Should I Call My Doctor?**

Call the office at (203) 200-2328 any time if you have severe pain or swelling, a fever higher than 101 degrees, or redness extending more than ½ inch beyond the edges of the incision. A small amount of drainage on your bandage is normal. You should call if the bandage becomes soaked with bright red blood, or has any other persistent drainage. Call if there is a foul odor from any incision.

Your Jackson Pratt drain(s) will drain bright red-colored fluid that resembles Hawaiian punch initially. This should change to a yellow fluid that resembles chicken broth. This is normal. If the drain fluid becomes cloudy or grey in color or creamy colored please call your surgeon. Call immediately if your drain will not stay compressed or if there if drainage around the drain site. Call if the drain output suddenly increases a large amount or totally stops draining.

If you are undergoing reconstructive surgery, your plastic surgeon will give you specific instructions. Any other questions regarding wounds, drains, and medications can be directed to your plastic surgeon at __________________.

**Pathology**

It can take 7 to 10 business days after surgery before your pathology results are ready. The results of your pathology report will be discussed with you at your post-op appointment. Call (203) 200-2328 if you have not already been given a follow-up appointment. A copy of the report will be provided to you at this appointment.