

# Care After Your Breast Surgery

## South Shore Regional Hospital

### Food and drink

- After your surgery, eating well-balanced, healthy meals will help you get your strength back.
- Drink at least 8 cups of fluid (like water or juice) a day.

### Activity

- Moving your body after surgery helps your body heal, prevents complications, and can help you get your strength back. Take short walks several times a day. It is important to follow the exercise plan given to you.
- Rest as needed.
- You can use your arm on your operated side to eat, wash, and comb your hair.
- **Do not** lift anything heavier than 10 pounds until your incision (cut) has healed and swelling has gone down.
- Ask your surgeon when you can drive again. This is usually within a few days. **Do not** drive if you are taking pain pills.

### Care of your incision

#### If you had a mastectomy:

- › Keep your incision dry until the drain(s) has been removed and your surgeon tells you it is OK to take a shower.

#### If you had a lumpectomy (with or without a sentinel node biopsy):

- › Take the large dressing off in 2 days. Leave the Steri-Strips™ on. You can shower after 2 days. Pat your Steri-Strips™ dry with a clean towel — **do not** rub. You can remove your Steri-Strips™ after 7 to 10 days when they start to lift.
- **Do not** wear tight clothing or jewelry on your arm or fingers on your operated side.
- **Do not** spend more time in the sun than needed while your incision is healing. Always wear sunscreen or keep the area(s) covered while you are in the sun.

- Protect the arm on your operated side from injury. If you have a cut or burn, put antiseptic lotion and a bandage on the area until it heals. Ask your primary health care provider first before using Polysporin®.
- If possible, avoid getting injections, blood tests, and getting your blood pressure taken from the arm on your operated side. This is more important if you had a full axillary dissection and less important if you had a sentinel node biopsy. If you have questions, talk with your surgeon.

## Pain

- Pain after surgery is common. If you were given a prescription for pain pills, take it exactly as you were told. If your pain is not getting better after 48 hours (2 days), call your primary health care provider.
- **Do not** drink alcohol while taking pain pills.
- **Do not** take more pain pills than you are prescribed or directed.

### Call your surgeon right away if:

- You have a fever (temperature over 38.5° C/101.3° F).
- You have chills.
- There is suddenly more bright red blood in the bulb drains.
- You cannot keep food or liquids down for more than 48 hours (2 days).
- You suddenly have pain in your arm or around your incision.
- Your incision is getting more red, swollen, or painful.
- There is pus (thick, yellow or green discharge) or bad-smelling discharge around your incision. Some clear discharge can be expected.

**If you are not able to reach your surgeon or primary health care provider, go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.**

My surgeon: \_\_\_\_\_

Clinic phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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www.nshealth.ca*

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