

# MARC MANDEL, M.D., F.A.C.S.

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## GENERAL AND ONCOLOGIC SURGERY OF THE BREAST AND ABDOMEN

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### **Post-Operative Care Instructions for Excisional breast biopsy and Lumpectomy**

You have just had an excisional breast biopsy or lumpectomy. Please follow my instructions to help minimize pain and length of recovery. Call the office as soon as possible for a post-operative appointment.

#### **WOUND CARE:**

- Please note that you have a bulky pressure dressing over your wound. This is to apply compression to the breast to help prevent it from bleeding post-operatively. These dressings are not waterproof and must be kept dry for three full days. You should wear your sports bra directly over this dressing during that time. After three days, carefully remove the bandages, at which time it is okay to take a light shower with your back to the shower. You will notice white tapes over your wound, which may be blood stained. The blood staining is nothing to worry about. Once the dressing is removed, you should continue to wear your sports bra for 24-hours a day for a total of two to three weeks. You may put gauze between the wound and the sports bra once the dressing has been removed. It is not necessary to use tape to hold the gauze in place. The bra should do that on its own.
- In certain instances, the breast will not be dressed in a bulky dressing, but simply with a clear plastic dressing over the wound. This dressing is waterproof and should not be removed for a week. You may shower after two days. You should still wear your sports bra over the dressing for 24-hours a day for a total of two to three weeks, as above.
- Please note that your sports bra should fit snugly and compress the breast well. If it fits loosely, it is too large.
- When you remove the dressing, you may note black-and-blue marks around the incision site. These will fade away over two to three weeks. You may also note some swelling in the area of the excision. It may even feel as though the lump has returned (if a lump were palpable to start out with). This is simply fluid and scar tissue, which accumulate post-surgically. This will soften up over a period of anywhere from two weeks to two months. Eventually the breast will have a completely normal texture without the lump palpable.

#### **PAIN CONTROL:**

- Your wound was injected with a long-acting local anesthetic prior to starting the procedure. This wears off in anywhere from four to eight hours. It is important that you start taking your pain medication before this medication wears off. It is much easier to prevent pain from occurring than it is to stop it once it has occurred. Keep this in mind when taking your oral medication as well. You have been given a narcotic, unless you specified that you did not want one, which you can take every four hours if necessary. Most women find that they can switch to Tylenol or Ibuprofen after only a few days.
- For the first two days, ice is important in keeping the swelling down and reducing pain. You may use an ice pack that does not get the wound wet. Ice should be applied twenty minutes on and twenty minutes off. The ice should not be in contact with the skin directly for more than twenty minutes, as it can cause frostbite. Ice is only effective for the first forty-eight hours. Following the first forty-eight hours, a heating pad can be used and, again, for only short periods of time, ten or fifteen minutes, as not to burn the skin.

#### **ACTIVITY:**

- You may carry out most of your daily activities, including driving. Be sure to wear your sports bra during these activities. Even after two weeks go by you might find it more comfortable to wear your sports bra whenever you are active for the first month or so. I would recommend avoiding contact sports and vigorous exercise for the first few weeks. Once the wound is no longer tender to touch and you have seen me for your first post-operative check up, we can discuss what type of activity you would like to engage in and how long a period you should refrain from

that.

- You may engage in sexual activity at any time after the surgery that you wish.

**DIET:**

- You have no dietary restrictions that you did not have existing pre-operatively.

**BOWEL MOVEMENTS:**

- If you are taking Percocet for a period of several days and certainly if you are taking it more than once a day during this period of time, you may begin to experience constipation. If this is the case, I would recommend taking Milk of Magnesia or Senokot or a similar laxative if you have not had a bowel movement for a total of 72-hours.

**YOU SHOULD CALL ME IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OCCUR:**

1. Temperature greater than 101 for more than 24-hours.
2. Excessive bleeding or swelling of the breast, beyond that which was described in the first section.
3. If your pain is increasing steadily over a period of several days rather than slowly decreasing, I would recommend that you give me a call.

IF YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE HAVING A HEART ATTACK OR OTHER EMERGENT PROBLEM, PLEASE CALL 9-1-1 FIRST TO HAVE AN AMBULANCE BRING YOU TO THE HOSPITAL, THEN CONTACT THE OFFICE TO LET ME KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON.

\* If you have also had an axillary node biopsy, axillary node dissection, or sentinel node biopsy, please see the separate instruction sheet included with this.

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