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Postoperative Instructions following Breast Reconstruction

You will be bruised and swollen following a breast surgery. The swelling will be greatest for 36 - 48 hours after surgery. You may have some oozing of blood or serum from your incisions for several days postoperatively. Your doctor may have needed to place drains during your surgery. These should be emptied and the amount recorded in a log twice daily. Your pain may be considerable for the first week after surgery. You can expect the swelling to diminish after the first 10 days. The bruising may persist for 10 days or longer.

You can promote more rapid healing by following these simple rules.

1. Keep your head elevated on several pillows while sleeping.
2. Drink 8 glasses of water a day.
3. You may place ice packs on your chest for the first 48 hours after surgery.
4. Wear your surgical bra or a sports bra (no underwire bras) at all times until your Doctor tells you otherwise.
5. You may shower 48 hours after surgery if you do not have drains. If you do have drains, you may sponge bathe until your doctor removes them.
6. Take your prescribed antibiotics and pain medication as directed.
7. Do not exercise until your doctor instructs you to do so. Walking is encouraged!
8. Do not smoke following your surgery.
9. Do not take Aspirin, Advil, Motrin, Ibuprofen, Naprosyn or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications unless your Doctor instructs you to do so.
10. Call your doctor if you have any fever or chills, shortness of breath, leg pain or swelling, or other concerns.