

Mastectomy

Preoperative Preparation

Fasting: It is important to follow your instructions about fasting before your surgery. Ask the doctor which of your routine medications you should take that day in spite of not eating.

Pre-op Shower: Take a thorough shower (preferably with antibacterial soap such as Dial or Hibiclens but any good soap will do) with emphasis to the area of the planned incision, the night before and the morning of your surgery. Underarm shaving is not necessary.

Postoperative Instructions

You should remove the gauze bandage approximately 48 hrs after the procedure. Keep the area dry until you first post op visit. If there are external sutures, they will need to be removed in 5-7 days. Wounds that have tapes on the skin under the gauze have dissolvable sutures that do not require removal.

If you have a drain, the nurses will instruct you in its care before you leave the hospital. The fluid coming out of the drain contains a lot of protein and often clots the tube. Fluid coming out around the tube and not into the tube is a sure sign the tube is plugged. The fluid is common and will nearly always open up with persistent stripping of the tube. It is not dangerous but can be messy.

You may wear a bra if it is more comfortable. There are good surgical support garments available. You only need to wear one if it is comfortable and does not irritate the area where the drain exits the skin. There are no significant restrictions on your activity. Use your arm as you feel is appropriate. You are not encouraged to exercise the arm until after the drain is removed. Your mastectomy site should not be very painful. The pain should be easily controlled with the mild narcotic prescribed. If the wound becomes red, significantly more painful after 3-4 days, or starts draining fluid, call the office.

Call for a follow-up appointment according to your postoperative instructions. Your pathology report should be completed 48-72 hours after the biopsy. Call the office for the results.