Home Care Instructions for Tissue Expansion

Thank you for choosing Georgia Regents Health System for your health care needs. This information is to help answer some of the questions you may have about your operation and to give you instructions to follow during your recovery period. If you have any other questions, please ask your doctor or nurse.

Activity
- Placement of a tissue expander may be done on an outpatient basis or may require a brief hospital stay.
- You must avoid bending, straining, or lifting for 2 weeks. Typically, you can resume normal activities after 2-3 weeks.
- If the expander is filled gradually with saline, most patients have no difficulty keeping up with their usual schedules. You may want to cut down when you near the end of the expansion process.

Wound Care
- You may shower 24 hours after the dressings are removed. Use a mild soap and water. If steri-strips are placed, pat dry. The strips will gradually fall off.
- Healing will continue for several weeks as swelling ends. Dressings will be applied to your incisions. You may be asked to wear a supportive binder to secure the dressings. Avoid tape to the healing skin if at all possible.
- You will be advised to massage the tissue expander as it inflated. This will help prevent painful scar formation. Expect to start massage for 2 or 3 weeks after the expander is placed.
- Smoking has a NEGATIVE effect on wound healing and leads to potential skin necrosis and a poor result. It is advisable that patients avoid smoking before and after surgery to produce the best possible surgical outcomes.
- Monitor your surgical sites for any skin changes. If the surrounding skin becomes gray, dusky, or black it may indicate an alteration in blood supply. If this occurs, please notify your doctor. We may need to remove some of the fluid or prepare for a surgical revision.
- Monitor your expander for possible deflation. Please notify your doctor if you see a change in the volume of your expander. The saline in the device will be safely absorbed into your system and the expander can be replaced.
- Sutures will be removed as determined by your physician.
- You may be concerned about the condition of your scars after surgery. Products are available such as Mederma, Scar Fade, and Scar Solution. Ask your doctor which product is best for you. These products can be used after the sutures are removed and the wound is completely closed.
Medications

- Mild discomfort is common and can be controlled with medication. Please take your pain medications as prescribed. Your pain will gradually improve and you will be able to decrease the amount of pain medications you are taking. You may also experience feelings of pressure after each filling of the expander. If necessary, take your pain medication one hour before each expansion.
- You may be asked to take antibiotics to reduce the risk of infection. If ordered, please take as prescribed and monitor the surgical site for signs of infection.
- To prevent constipation, consider taking a stool softener after surgery. Mild over-the-counter medications like Colace or Senekot as directed can be helpful. If symptoms of constipations persist, please advise your physician.

Diet

- You may resume your usual diet as soon as you feel like it.
- Smoking has a NEGATIVE effect on wound healing and leads to potential skin changes and a poor result. Wound debridement or surgical revision may be necessary. It is advisable that patients avoid smoking before and after surgery to produce the best possible surgical outcome.
- You may have decreased appetite. Try eating small, frequent meals and take sips of water or juice throughout the day. Taking your medications with food may decrease the potential for nausea and vomiting.
- The body needs extra fluids and calories to heal after surgery. Drink at least 8-8oz. glasses of water daily. You may have decreased appetite.

Call your doctor if:
- you develop a sudden increase or large amount of blood from your wound
- you develop a bad smell or odor from the wound
- you notice redness, warmth, or increased soreness around the wound
- you develop a fever of 101.5 degrees or higher

Follow Up
We will give you an appointment to return to the clinic. It is important that you keep this appointment so that your doctor can be sure that you are healing and arrange any further care that you need. If you need to talk to your doctor, you can call:
Days: 706-721-2198
Evenings, Nights, & Weekends: Ask to speak to the Plastic Surgeon on call