



MOUNT AUBURN HOSPITAL

**TAYLOR & SULLIVAN PLASTIC SURGERY
HELENA O. TAYLOR, MD, PhD, FACS
STEPHEN R. SULLIVAN, MD, MPH, FACS**

300 Mount Auburn St Ste 304
Cambridge, MA 02138

Phone: 617-492-0620 FAX: 617-492-0631

www.massplasticsurgeons.com



HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL
TEACHING HOSPITAL

**BREAST SURGERY (Breast Reduction, Breast Lift, Breast Reconstruction) AFTERCARE
INSTRUCTIONS**

- **Preoperatively,** In the week before your operation:
 - Consider eating pineapple, it may help reduce bruising
 - Consider supplementing with Arnica montana, it may help reduce bruising
 - Complete household chores and prepare meals for the first few days of postoperative recovery
 - Follow preoperative instructions with eating, drinking, and medications. Please have nothing to eat or drink after midnight the night prior to surgery, except for a sip of water with your medications
- **Postoperatively,**
 - You will need someone to take you home, and ideally stay with you for the first 24-48 hours, as you may feel drowsy. You may require help the first few times you get out of bed.
 - It is important to get out of bed and walk (with assistance) every few hours after your breast operation to decrease the chance of postoperative problems such as blood clots.
 - Practice 15-20 deep breaths every hour to keep your lungs open.
- Please take your medications as directed by Dr. Taylor or Dr. Sullivan to manage discomfort or symptoms. You are likely to be given:
 - Acetaminophen (Tylenol) 1000 mg every 8 hours, space doses 4 hours after Ibuprofen so one or the other is taken every 4 hours
 - Ibuprofen (Motrin) 800 mg or Celecoxib (Celebrex) 200 mg every 8 hours, space doses 4 hours after Acetaminophen so one or the other is taken every 4 hours
 - Gabapentin 300 mg every 8 hours for 7 days. If you have dizziness, double vision, or significant sleep disturbances, consider stopping the Gabapentin.

You may also be given:

- Vitamin C 500 mg daily for 50 days
- Oxycodone 5 mg – 1-2 tablets every 6 hours as needed for pain, though many patients may not need it
- Colace 100 mg twice daily to prevent constipation, it is important to have a bowel movement each day. Prune juice may also be helpful.
- Zofran 8 mg every 8 hours if needed for nausea

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- Scopolamine patch may be placed on the neck on the day of surgery and can stay for 3 days to prevent nausea
- Eat a light diet for 2-3 days and avoid spicy food. Some suggestions to ease abdominal discomfort or indigestion after surgery:
 - Drink water or warm liquids
 - Prune juice to prevent constipation

WOUND CARE

- If you had breast reconstruction following breast cancer, you may or may not have drains. The drainage bulbs connected to the end of the drains should be compressed at all times to keep suction. It is normal for red fluid and blood clots to form in the drains. Please record time and amounts of drainage over a 24-hour period – we will provide a form. Usually the drains will be removed when the drainage is 30cc or less in a 24-hour period. All patients heal differently and according to many factors. On average, drains remain for one to two weeks.
- You may shower or sponge bath the day after the operation with assistance and wash your skin as you normally would with soap and water. Avoid soaking the incision, although it will not hurt to get a splash of water from the shower on the wounds. Gently pat dry after washing.
- You may wear a camisole, postoperative bra provided at the hospital, or no bra after surgery. Dr. Taylor or Dr. Sullivan will advise you when you may wear an underwire bra - usually a minimum of 6 weeks after surgery.
- Most wounds will be closed with absorbable sutures that are buried and skin glue. The skin glue forms a barrier to water. Please do not remove the glue, it will fall off on its own after a few weeks. Do not apply any lotions, potions, ointments, creams or solutions (e.g. no hydrogen peroxide or alcohol) as they can be harmful to the fragile healing tissue.
- Do not smoke or expose yourself to smoke, smokers or nicotine as wound healing will be compromised.
- Infection is very uncommon, but please call Dr. Taylor or Dr. Sullivan at any sign of infection which would be signaled by fever, increased pain, spreading redness or significant swelling.

ACTIVITY

- For the first few days following breast surgery, avoid raising your blood pressure or heart rate as it can cause bleeding. We recommend gentle range of motion exercises with your arms 3 to 5 times per day starting the day of the operation.
- Please do not drive until turning the steering wheel can be done safely and without pain (usually 5 to 7 days). Do not drive while taking pain medications such as oxycodone.

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- Do not lift anything heavier than 10-20 lbs, run, lift weights, or perform strenuous exercise for 7-10 days. Do not perform chest muscle exercises or strenuous bouncing exercises for 6 weeks.
- Massage to the breast and areas of liposuction can help increase circulation and soften firm areas under the skin. Please wait at least 3 to 4 weeks after surgery to start massage to avoid increased swelling.

GENERAL OUTCOMES

- Moderate swelling of your breasts is to be expected. Following breast reduction or breast lift, the breasts may initially appear quite high and perky, and will settle into a natural appearance over several weeks. Please be patient.
- If you elected to have simultaneous liposuction, swelling and bruising is to be expected. Please be patient, the swelling and feeling of tightness will gradually subside over the following months. Bruising may last for a few weeks and will move down your body due to gravity.
- It is not uncommon for wounds to develop along the incision under the breast. These typically appear 2 to 3 weeks after the operation at the junction of the vertical incision and inframammary fold. The wounds are often red with patches of yellow and white – this is not an infection, which is usually associated with fever and spreading redness. These wounds can be treated with soap and water wash and a gauze dressing; and they will heal on their own in a few days to weeks.
- The incisions often appear lumpy and bumpy. This is normal and the incisions will flatten over a few weeks.
- Following breast reduction or breast lift, the nipples can be inverted rather than projecting outward. This is normal and the nipples will usually project again within a few days to weeks.
- The areola can appear asymmetric or irregularly shaped. This is normal and is due to the dissolving suture - similar to the way a draw string works on a garbage bag. Please be patient, the irregular shape and asymmetry will resolve over a few weeks.
- Sensations like numbness, shooting pain, and burning are common during the healing process, may last several weeks, and gradually disappear. If the nipples are sensitive, it is best to desensitize them with gentle touch.
- Scars take one full year to mature. You may notice that they become red, raised and firm for several weeks to months before becoming soft, flat and pale. Avoid Vitamin E as it can irritate the scar. Mederma has no proven benefit and is likely not worth the expense. All incisions will be sensitive to sunlight during the healing phase. Direct sun contact or tanning booths are to be avoided. Silicone cream or skin moisturizer with sunscreen and gentle massage may be helpful.
- Please call our office (617-492-0620) if you have:
 - Continuous bleeding (a small amount bleeding from the incision is expected)
 - Significantly more swelling on one side when compared to the other

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- Worsening pain
- Fever, spreading redness or irritation of the skin
- Shortness of breath

It is important to be seen by Dr. Taylor or Dr. Sullivan after your operation. They will see you in follow-up appointments at regular intervals, typically 1 week, 2-4 weeks, 3 months, 6 months, and 1 year or as often as needed post-op. Call to schedule your appointments at Taylor & Sullivan Plastic Surgery office at (617) 492-0620 between the hours of 8:30 – 5:00 or visit our webpage at www.massplasticsurgeons.com. We are always available for postoperative concerns or emergencies and can be reached through our paging service 24 hours per day at (617) 492-0620.



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