Postoperative Instructions for Breast Biopsy and Breast Lumpectomy

Thank you for choosing Catholic Health as your healthcare provider. These are instructions to follow after your Biopsy or Lumpectomy surgery:

Pain Management

- People experience different types and amounts of pain or discomfort after surgery. The goal of pain management is to assess your own level of discomfort and to take medication as needed. You will have better results controlling your pain if you take pain medication before your pain is severe.
- Your doctor prescribed a prescription for pain medication to be taken as needed as directed on the bottle. It is recommended to take medication for pain on a regular schedule. Tylenol can be added to replace your pain medication or to be taken alternatively.
- Avoid ibuprofen and aspirin products as they may cause bleeding from your site. You may resume taking these medications following your postoperative visit.
- Everyone is different and if one plan to decrease your pain is not working, it can be changed/modified.
- Narcotics that are prescribed for pain can cause or worsen constipation so increase your fluid intake, eat high fiber foods (prunes/bran) and make sure that you are up moving and taking small walks.
- An icepack may be helpful to decrease discomfort and swelling. You can apply ice OVER the dressing on and ½ hour off for 6 to 8 hours following the biopsy procedure. Do not put ice directly on the skin.

Incision, Dressing Care, Supportive Bra

Your incision, or scar, has both stitches and steri-strips, which are small white strips of tape, and is covered by a gauze dressing and tape.

- Wearing a bra will help reduce swelling and will keep pressure on the biopsy site. It is advised that you also sleep with this on for the first evening as it will restrain movement of the breast.
- On the first day home from surgery watch your dressings for any increased bleeding.
- Do not remove steri-strips or stitches. Do not cover or put ointment/lotions on the incisions. If gauze dressings were used, it is OK to remove the outer gauze dressings after 48 hours and leave the incision open to air. Replace the gauze when wearing bras.
- You may shower once the gauze dressings are removed (about 48 hours). It is alright to get the steri-strips wet and you should not pull them off. They will come off as they loosen, or they will be removed at your postoperative visit. After you shower, pat dry the incision area with a towel.
- Most people feel more comfortable wearing a bra regularly for the first few days. Wear whatever bra is most comfortable for you but not “no bra.”
• Expect to experience some swelling or bruising at or near the surgical site. This is normal. If the swelling becomes intense or you notice drainage that is not clear, especially if this is combined with a fever of 101° or above, notify your surgeon’s office as this may be a sign of infection.

• If you have had a ‘balloon’ inserted for possible radiation treatment, DO NOT remove dressings and do not shower until after your first postoperative visit at your doctor’s office. Call the office if your dressings become intolerably saturated so they can be changed. You can take a sponge bath or sit in a tub of water up to your waist. Keep your bra on as much as possible.

**Activity**

• You may and are encouraged to resume limited normal activity as soon as you are able. Avoid any activity that will cause even minor trauma to the surgical area, particularly arm movement on the affected side. Walking is a normal activity that can be restarted right away—NOT powerwalking.

• Avoid any direct trauma to the surgical site.

• For the first 7-10 days following your surgery, avoid lifting, pushing or pulling with the side your surgery was performed (e.g. carrying groceries, vacuuming, lifting children).

• Very strenuous activity such as aerobics, jogging, etc. should be delayed for at least 1 week. No swimming or use of a Jacuzzi for one month.

• You may resume driving when you are no longer on narcotics and you feel safe turning the wheel and stopping quickly.

• You may be able to return to work in 2 days post biopsy or 1 to 8 weeks post lumpectomy unless otherwise instructed by your doctor.

**Diet/Medications**

• You have no restrictions on your diet and may resume your regular healthy diet immediately. If you feel nausea from the anesthesia or are vomiting, this will pass. Drink clear liquids or a Popsicle until you are feeling better. You can resume all of your regular medications immediately except blood thinners.