



Independence Surgical Clinic

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Lumpectomy Instructions

Risks of Surgery

Lumpectomy is usually a very safe procedure, but these are some of the risks that can occur after surgery.

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Infection
- Numbness at surgery site
- Scarring or firm tissue at surgery site
- Seroma (collection of fluid at surgery site)
- Hematoma (collection of blood at surgery site)
- Need for repeat surgery

If a lymph node biopsy or removal of all of the lymph nodes is done, there are a few additional risks.

- Arm swelling (lymphedema)
- Shoulder pain or stiffness
- Numbness on chest and underarm/inner arm
- Winged scapula (very rare)

Bra

We recommend that lumpectomy patients choose a sports bra to wear for some time after surgery. It should be snug-fitting and should close in the front with a zipper or hook and eye. We recommend the Danskin or Avia front zip (more support) or 2-pack Fruit of the Loom Comfort Front-Close Sports Bra (soft cotton bra with hook and eye front closure) (all sometimes available at Wal-Mart); Kohl's often also has good options. In general, you will be more comfortable with a bra for support.

Surgery

Some time in the days before surgery, most patients will go the mammogram and ultrasound area to have a magnetic "seed" placed to guide the surgeon in the operating room. Other patients may have a wire placed on the morning of surgery if a "seed" is not recommended or is not available. The morning of surgery, if you are having a lymph node procedure done, you will go to the nuclear medicine radiology department to have an injection for this. When this is complete, you will go to the operating room for the procedure. After surgery, you will notice a bright blue spot on your breast if you had a lymph node procedure. This will go away a few days after surgery. You may also have blue or green urine or stools after surgery. Your incision will be covered with super glue. You should go home a few hours after surgery is over.

Some patients find that using an ice pack at the incision sites is helpful for discomfort or swelling. It is a good idea to wear a bra at most times for the first week after surgery. After that, you can wear it as needed for comfort. It is ok to shower and get your incision wet on the first day after surgery.

Activity

Walking and most normal activity may be resumed right away and is strongly encouraged. You should use your judgment – if something is painful or uncomfortable, do not do it. You may resume driving when you are not taking pain medications, and when you can “crank the wheel” and “slam on the brakes” without discomfort. You may shower the day after surgery.

You will visit with Occupational Therapy before surgery to teach you exercises to do after surgery to help prevent complications and limited range of motion. If you had a lymph node biopsy, you will begin the Phase 1 exercises on the first day after surgery and continue these daily; you will change to the Phase 2 exercises after 1 week. If you did not have a lymph node procedure, you can begin both Phase 1 and Phase 2 exercises on the first day after surgery.

Depending on your type of work, you may be able to return to work within a few days to a few weeks after surgery. Every person is different. You can discuss this with your doctor specifically after surgery.

Diet and Medications

You may resume your normal diet when you are at home. Drink a lot of water – 8-10 glasses a day is best – as many people experience constipation when using pain pills. You may want to also take a stool softener like Colace two times a day while using your pain pills. Most patients do not need a large amount of narcotic strong pain pills. We recommend Tylenol or Ibuprofen most of the time and the pain pills only when the other medications are not helping.

Questions

Please call us anytime with any question you may have. If you have any of the below, please contact us right away.

- Pain unrelieved by pain medications
- Fever over 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- Increasing swelling or redness
- Foul smelling drainage from incision
- Blood-soaked dressings
- Medication reactions or rash
- Worsening depressed mood or anxiety

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