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### **Post Operative instructions for Mastectomy (partial or complete) and/or Axillary dissection.**

**Call and schedule your post-op visit to occur approximately 7-10 days after surgery.**

#### **Wound care:**

- 1) Remove outer dressing (if you have them) at 24-48 hours post-op after surgery.
- 2) Leave the steri-strips in place if you have them. They will fall off on their own.
- 3) Your staples will be removed at your post operative appointment. You may take a shower 24 hours after surgery unless otherwise instructed by your physician. Do not soak in a tub or go swimming until released by your physician.
- 4) You may use an ice bag to reduce swelling at the surgery site for the first 24 hours and then switch to heat if needed. It is normal to feel a knot under your surgical incision for several months after surgery.
- 5) It is not unusual to feel numbness or burning of the chest wall or in the upper arm after surgery.
- 6) You may experience discomfort or swelling with increased activity.

#### **Diet:**

You may advance your diet as tolerated after surgery.

#### **Activity:**

For 6 weeks after surgery

- 1) Normal daily activities are encouraged.
- 2) No driving until you are pain free and no longer using your pain medication.
- 3) Limit your shoulder movement on the affected side until your post operative appointment with your physician. You are able to use your hand and lower arm.
- 4) We encourage our Breast Cancer patients to utilize the Reach to Recovery program sponsored by The American Cancer Society. They have a wonderful support program and excellent post operative exercises to keep your arm mobile. *For more information or to locate a Reach to Recovery program in your area, visit "[In My Community](#)" on the ACS Web site at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) or call toll-free at 1-800-227-2345.*

#### **Drains:**

Drains are used after surgery to promote healing, you will be instructed on how to empty and document 24-hour totals on each drain (usually one and occasionally two drains are placed). This Drain Total Log should be brought to your post-operative visit for your physician to review and is often the deciding factor regarding time for removal.

#### **Constipation and bloating:**

You should have a bowel movement within 3 days of surgery. If you are constipated, increase your water intake and use an over-the-counter stool softener such as mineral oil or a laxative such as Milk of Magnesia as directed on the bottle.

#### **Smoking:**

Smoking can cause a multitude of problems for a surgical patient, including the non-healing of a surgical incision and an increased rate of post-operative infection. Please do not smoke for two weeks prior to and two weeks after surgery.

#### **Call our office if:**

- 1) You develop any unusual signs or symptoms such as tenderness, bleeding, redness or drainage at the surgery site.
- 2) You have a temperature of 100.5 degrees or higher.
- 3) You have shortness of breath upon exertion.

Memorial Hermann Sugar Land Location:	17510 W. Grand Parkway S., Suite 490 · Sugar Land, Texas 77479
Methodist Sugar Land Location:	16651 Southwest Freeway, Suite 360 · Sugar Land, Texas 77479
Memorial Hermann Southwest Location:	7777 Southwest Freeway, Suite 810 · Houston, Texas 77074
Memorial Hermann Katy Location:	23920 Katy Freeway, Suite 560A · Katy, Texas 77494
Memorial City Location:	920 Gessner, Suite 620 · Houston, Texas 77024
St. Joseph Hospital	1315 St. Joseph Pkwy Suite 1708 · Houston, TX 77002
Pearland Kirby Medical Plaza Location:	15015 Kirby Dr., Suite 200B · Houston, Texas 77047
Central Business Office:	13811 Murphy Road · Stafford, Texas 77477