Mastectomy or Lumpectomy with Axillary Dissection Post Op Instructions

These post-operative instructions are provided for our patients' convenience.

Wound Care
Usually we discharge breast patients with a large white dressing covering the wound and drains. This will be removed at your first post-operative visit. Please try to keep this wound dressing clean and dry. It is okay to bathe, but keep the dressing clean and dry. You will have some numbness and tingling around your incision, in your armpit, and along the underside of your arm. This is to be expected.

Diet
Following your surgery you may resume your normal diet.

Activity
When you get home from the hospital, it is important to be up and moving around at the house. Walking up stairs is acceptable. Once we have seen you back in the office for your first post-operative visit, we will recommend range of motion exercises to keep your shoulder functioning normally. Some simple exercises include using a hairbrush to brush your hair using the arm on the operative side. This allows you to move your shoulder up and your elbow back. An additional simple exercise is bending over and moving your shoulder in a circular fashion. This works to keep the joint flexible.

Medication
You should resume all your home medications with the exception of aspirin and other anticoagulants. Aspirin and other anticoagulants should be discontinued for at least a week following surgery unless other arrangements have been made with your doctor.

Follow Up Visit
We like to see you within 3 – 5 days of your discharge from the hospital so that we may change your dressing and remove any drains at the appropriate time.

Pain Control
Please use the prescription pain medication given to you at the hospital. Be sure to take narcotic pain medication with food so as not to upset your stomach. Should you experience nausea during the post-operative period, this is usually related to the pain medication and can be treated by stopping the pain medication. You can gradually taper this over to Tylenol. If you have had no past problems with ulcer disease or gastrointestinal bleeding or allergies to aspirin, you can use Ibuprofen. Do not drive while you are taking a prescription pain medication.

Bowel Movements
It is not unusual for patients who have had surgery and who are taking narcotic pain medication to become constipated. This can be treated by gradually increasing your activity and drinking a normal amount of water to remain hydrated. A high fiber diet or dietary fiber supplements (Metamucil, Fibercon, Konsyl, Citrucel) are also beneficial. In addition, you may obtain Ducolax suppositories or Fleet enemas at the drug store without a prescription (over the counter) and use it once or twice a day as needed. Alternatively, a dose of Milk of Magnesia may be used.

Drain Care
You may have closed suction drains. These drains are used to remove fluid from the wound. It is important when handling these drains to wash your hands before and after emptying the drains. Please keep a written log of drain output (the number of cc's in a 24 hour period). This helps us to know when to remove your drains. Once the drainage has diminished to our satisfaction, then we will remove these drains. If you have had a plastic surgery reconstruction, the plastic surgeon will remove these drains.

Pathology Report
Usually it takes the pathologist 3 – 5 days to completely process a breast biopsy specimen. As soon as we have these results, we will go over them with you in the office. You may have a copy of this pathology report and we will also forward a copy to your oncologist for his review.

Special Attention
If you have temperature of 101 degrees, have persistent nausea, vomiting or any other problems which you think need medical attention, please call us at the office. If you have any questions or problems, during normal business hours 8:00am-5:00pm, please call Dr Todd A. Moffatt's office at (254) 230-1234. If you are having a problem after hours, please call our office and press 2 to leave a message. Someone will return your call promptly.