

After a Mastectomy:

The day of surgery:

- You will wake up in the PACU (Post Anesthesia Care Unit). You may have oxygen, a blood pressure cuff, an IV, and/or other monitors attached to you at this point. You may have compression wraps on your legs that gently squeeze and release to help maintain good circulation. You may have a Foley catheter in place, draining your urine. You will probably stay in the PACU for 1-2 hours.
- You will have received pain medication during surgery, so you should not be in much pain when you wake up.
- You will have one or more post-operative drains.
- You will be admitted to a private hospital room on the 7th floor.
- Visiting hours are from 12-8pm daily.
- While in the hospital, you may have a PCA (Patient Controlled Analgesia) pump. You can give yourself doses of pain medication by pressing the button. You cannot overdose, because the pump is programmed to stop at a certain point.
- If you don't have reconstruction, a certified medical fitter may visit you in the hospital to discuss fitting you for a breast prosthesis.

Pain control is important! Pain prevents you from restarting activity and breathing deeply. So don't hesitate to use or ask for pain medications if you need them.

After discharge:

- **Dressings.** Your incision will be dressed with surgical glue, steri-strips, or other dressings. Usually dissolvable stitches are used, but occasionally nylon sutures are used.
- **Bathing.** Sponge bathe until your surgeon tells you it is okay to shower.
- **Drain Care.** See the Drain Care Guide for instructions on drain care.
- **Activity Level.** Surgery makes you tired. You can do nearly all of your normal activities, but allow yourself frequent rest periods. You should avoid heavy lifting on the surgical side for four weeks. Talk with your surgeon about post-operative activity restrictions for your individual case.
- **Pain relief.** You will be given a narcotic pain pill to take as needed after surgery. Some women do not need it at all, but it can be especially helpful the first night. Do not drive while you are taking this medication.
- **Monitor yourself.** Watch for signs of infection, and contact your doctor's office if you note any:
 - Temperature above 101° Fahrenheit
 - Increased redness around the incision
 - Foul-smelling drainage from the incision
- **Exercise.** See the Exercise Guide for post-mastectomy exercises.
- **Sensation.** The mastectomy incision is usually numb. Avoid ice or heat packs on this area, because it's hard to tell what is too hot or too cold.