

After Goldilocks Breast Reconstruction

Self-care at home

This handout explains what to expect, how to prepare, and how to plan for your recovery after mastectomy with Goldilocks reconstruction.



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What is a Goldilocks procedure?

At the time of skin-sparing mastectomy, surgeons sometimes remove extra tissue and make it flat. However, in a *Goldilocks procedure*, your surgeon re-arranges this tissue over the mastectomy to create a small breast mound.

Incision care and healing

You may be given a surgical bra. If this is the case, wear the surgical bra for 4 weeks after your surgery as comfort allows. Remove it for showering and laundering.

If you are not provided with a surgical bra, you are welcome to wear a non-compressive bra or camisole (no underwire).

Remove the outermost dressing on your breast 48 hours after surgery. Do this before you shower for the first time. If your incision has thin strips of white tape (Steri-Strips) over it, leave them in place until they fall off. If the Steri-Strips are still in place when you come to the clinic for your first follow-up visit, your provider will remove them.

You may experience numbness at your surgical site. Your surgical sites may be bruised and swollen.

Hygiene

- Please take a shower 48 hours after surgery. We recommend daily showers to reduce the risk of infection.
- Use mild soap and wash very gently over your incisions.
- Do not take a bath, sit in a hot tub, or go swimming until your incisions are fully healed and no scabs remain. This may take 4 to 6 weeks.

Drains

You will have drains placed at the time of surgery. We will teach you how to care for them. Please read the handout “Closed Bulb Drain Care: For a Jackson-Pratt (JP) or Blake drain” to learn more.

Activities and return to work

- For **4 weeks**, move your arms gently:
 - Do not reach your arm above shoulder height on the side of surgery.
 - Do not lift, push, or pull anything that weighs more than 8 pounds (about the weight of a gallon of water). This includes children and pets.
 - Avoid repetitive arm movements such as chores (vacuuming, doing dishes, and laundry).
- Avoid aerobic exercise (activities that cause heavy breathing or sustained elevated heart rate).
- Walking is encouraged, helpful for healing and rebuilding strength. Start with 3 to 4 walks a day for 5 to 10 minutes each. Gradually increase your distance and length of time as you heal.
- Return to work varies from person to person and depends on the type of work you do. Please discuss with your surgeon what may be best for you.

Sleep position

- Sleep on your back for 4 weeks after surgery, with your head slightly raised.
- It may be helpful to stack pillows, use a wedge pillow, or sleep in a recliner to keep your head raised.

Pain control

- Please read the handout “Pain Control After Reconstructive Surgery.”
- Please do not use ice or heat directly on your surgical sites.

When to contact the care team:

Call the clinic nurse if you have:

- Bleeding or drainage that soaks your dressing (hold pressure on the site to lessen bleeding)
- A fever higher than 100.5°F (38°C)
- Shaking and/or chills
- Any signs of infection at your surgical site
- Redness
- Increased swelling
- Bad-smelling drainage
- Pus or cloudy colored drainage
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- New rash
- Pain that is worsening and is no longer eased by your pain medicine

Questions?

Your questions are important. Contact your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

During Clinic Hours (Monday through Friday except holidays, 8am to 5pm):

If you have any questions or concerns, we recommend messaging your surgeon through EPIC MyChart. Please include a photo if needed.

Alternatively, you may call the Center for Reconstructive Surgery at 206-598-1217 option 2.

Urgent Needs Outside of Clinic Hours

If you have an urgent care need after hours, on weekends, or holidays, please call 206-598-6190 and ask to speak to the plastic surgeon on call.

If you are experiencing new chest pain or shortness of breath, please call 911.

If you are experiencing redness, swelling, pain/cramp, or warmth usually in one limb, this may be signs of a blood clot. Please go to your local ER.