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MASTECTOMY DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

Pain relief: Do NOT take aspirin or aspirin-containing medications. You have been given a prescription for pain medication. These medications may cause constipation, so drink lots of water and eat a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, bran cereal, prune juice, whatever you know works for you to keep your bowels moving.

Wound care: You may be discharged with a tube connected to a bulb (called a Jackson-Pratt drain) to remove fluid and some blood that naturally collect under the skin after surgery. If you do have one, you'll need to empty the bulb of fluid whenever it becomes about 1/2 full of fluid. The nurses in the hospital will show you how to do this. You may also be wearing a bandage that will be held in place by a surgical bra. You may change the dressing and shower in 24 hours. To change the dressing you can use gauze or Kotex pads. You may notice some drainage coming through the dressing. Do not allow this to alarm you. Not all of the fluid that needs to be drained will come through the tube (if you have one). Some of it will drain around the tube and saturate the dressing. Please call the office if you have any concerns about any of these instructions.

Activity: You may resume any activity that doesn't cause discomfort the day following your surgery but avoid lifting anything heavier than 5 pounds with the affected arm for 2 or 3 days. After that, we encourage you to use that arm normally. In fact, we encourage you to put the arm through its full range of motion several times a day. Brush your hair, walk your fingers up a wall to reach high over your head, perform slow arm circles to prevent stiffness from developing in your shoulder joint.

Temperature elevation: It would not be unusual for you to have a mild temperature elevation (up to 100 degrees) for a few days after surgery. It is not necessary for you to measure your temperature unless you are concerned that you have a significant elevation. Do not hesitate to call if you have a concern about a temperature elevation.

Follow up: You will need to see your surgeon again in 7-10 days. Prior to discharge, if an appointment has not already been made, you need to call the office as soon as possible and make one.