

## Getting Ready for Mastectomy and Tissue Expander Surgery

This factsheet explains how to get ready for surgery. It also tells you what to expect at the hospital. We know you may feel anxious about having surgery, and we will do everything we can to make you feel safe.

**Your name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Breast surgeon's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

- Breast surgery clinic front desk: 801-213-4269

**Plastic surgeon's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

- Plastic surgery clinic front desk: 801-581-7719
- Plastic surgery clinic nurse line: 801-213-8467

**Pre-operative clinic date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Surgery date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of surgery:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hospital or health center where you will have surgery:**

- Huntsman Cancer Institute: 801-587-4300
- South Jordan Health Center: 801-213-4891
- Farmington Health Center: 801-213-6658
- University of Utah Hospital: 801-585-1449 (Area B)
- University of Utah Hospital: 801-646-9065 (Area E)

### Planning the surgery

Be sure to tell your health care team all the medicines and supplements you take, including:

- Prescription medicines
- Over-the-counter medicines
- Vitamins and other supplements
- Herbal remedies

Many people find it helpful to bring their medicines and supplements to the clinic appointment before surgery.

Some medicines can cause problems during and after surgery. Your surgeon may ask you to change medicines or stop taking them.

### 3 weeks before surgery

**Stop smoking and using nicotine.** Smoking slows the healing process. Your surgical team will not do breast reconstruction for people who currently smoke.

If you smoke or use nicotine, stop at least 3 weeks before your surgery date. This includes vaping, chewing tobacco, nicotine patches, and nicotine gum.

**Avoid secondhand smoke.** Ask people who smoke in your home to stop smoking or smoke outside.

**Stop taking hormone medicines.** If you take birth control or hormone replacement medicine, stop taking it 3 weeks before surgery. Wait 1 week after your surgery before taking it again.

### 2 weeks before surgery

**Stop taking tamoxifen.** If you take tamoxifen, stop taking it 2 weeks before surgery. Wait 1 week after your surgery before taking it again.

### 1 week before surgery

**Stop taking medicines that thin your blood.** If you take any of the medicines below, stop taking them 1 week before surgery.

- Aspirin or products that have aspirin (Alka Seltzer®, Bayer®, and Excedrin®)
- Ibuprofen (Advil® or Motrin®)
- Naproxen (Aleve®)

Talk to your surgeon if you take aspirin to prevent stroke or heart problems.

If you take a prescription blood thinner, you should have a plan for when to stop and restart your medicine. Talk to your surgical team if you have concerns.

**Stop taking herbal remedies and vitamins.** These can raise your risk of bleeding or react with the medicines your health care team will give you.

### 1 day before surgery

**After 2 p.m.,** call the hospital or health center where you will have surgery to find out where to go and what time to arrive. If your surgery is scheduled for a Monday, call after 2 p.m. the Friday before.

**In the evening,** shower and wash the surgery areas with antibacterial soap.

**After midnight,** do NOT eat or drink anything. This includes water.

## The day of your surgery

**Do not eat or drink anything.** You can take the daily medicine that your surgeon allows. Take only these medicines with a sip of water early in the morning:

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You may brush your teeth. Do not swallow any water.

**Wear comfortable clothes that fit loosely.** Choose clothes that open in the front.

Do not wear any makeup, moisturizers, creams, lotions, or nail polish. Do not wear any jewelry, including wedding rings.

Do not wear wigs. Do not wear any hair ornament or extension that has metal in it.

You can wear glasses, contact lenses, dentures, and hearing aids and take them off just before surgery. If you need a case, we can give you one.

### Bring the following things with you to the hospital:

- A friend or family member.
- Your photo ID.
- Your insurance card.
- Your flex spending card (if you have one).
- Payment for insurance co-pays or deductibles.
- Something to read or do while you wait for surgery.
- Comfortable clothes that fit loosely and open in the front to wear home after surgery.

### When you arrive at the hospital

At your appointment time, go to the surgery waiting area and check in at the desk.

After you check in, give your valuables to the family member or friend with you. A staff member will take you to a room where you will get ready for surgery.

Your nurse will do these things:

- Confirm your surgery time.
- Let you know about any delays.
- Make sure that all the needed testing is done.
- Confirm your type and location of surgery.

Your surgery team will meet you before you go to the operating room. They will do these things:

- Answer any last-minute questions.
- Draw surgery lines on your skin.
- Place an IV in your arm.
- Set up monitors that check your blood pressure, heartbeat, and other vital signs during surgery.

### In the operating room

You will lie on a comfortable, padded operating table. Your anesthesiologist will give you medicine to make you drowsy through the IV in your arm.

### In the recovery room

After your surgery, the team will move you to the recovery room. You will still be connected to the monitors. A recovery nurse will be there to care for you.

When your heartbeat, blood pressure, and oxygen level are stable, you will go to a hospital room.

A team member will let your friends and family know as soon as you are out of surgery. They cannot visit until you are moved to your hospital room.

Your stay in the recovery room will last 1 to 4 hours. Most people wake up 30 to 60 minutes after surgery. Many do not remember the recovery room at all.

### In your hospital room

Nurses will check that you are recovering well. Your surgery team will also check on your progress.

Your health care team will help you get up and walk within the first 4 hours after surgery. This helps your body heal.

Most people who are recovering from mastectomy with tissue expander surgery spend 1 night in the hospital.

We will make sure of these things before you go home:

- Your pain is controlled.
- You can eat and drink.
- You can sit up and walk.
- You know how to take your medicines.
- You know how to take care of your drain(s).

**When you go home**

Ask a friend or family member to drive you home. Do not drive while you are taking pain medicine. Do not drive until you can move your arms without pain.

Your doctor will tell you when it is okay to drive again.

**After you go home**

A nurse will call you 24 to 48 hours after you go home to see how you are doing. Your responses help us monitor your care.

The nurse will also ask you about your experience. These answers help us reward exceptional staff members and learn how we can improve.

**Follow-up care**

You will have your first follow-up visit with your care team one week after surgery. It is very important to come to all your follow-up appointments.

**Keeping you safe**

Here is how we keep you safe before and after surgery:

- We check at least 2 ways to make sure we have the correct patient for the correct procedure.
- Your surgeon will mark your skin to make sure we operate at the right place on your body.
- We give you antibiotics before your surgery to prevent infection.
- We wash our hands before and after meeting with each patient.
- We ask you to tell us if anything worries you or seems unsafe.
- We ask you to call for help each time you want to get up while in the hospital. Some medicines can make you more likely to fall. We want to help, we have time, and it is our privilege to assist you.

**Notes:**

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