

## **Dr. OLGA IVANOV**

### **BREAST SURGERY POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

Breast Biopsy, Mastectomy, Axillary Dissection

#### **General Instructions**

The following instructions will provide helpful information that will assist your recovery. These are designed to be general guidelines. Remember, everyone recovers differently. Listen to your body and rest when you are tired. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact my staff or myself.

Your breast biopsy incision was injected with a long-acting numbing medication prior to closure. This numbing effect will last for 3-5 hours. Once this medication has worn off you should only experience mild discomfort. You may have had an elastic bandage (Ace Wrap) placed around your chest at the completion of your surgery that immobilizes the breast—if the breast does not move it doesn't hurt (same concept as wrapping the ankle after an injury). You may remove the Ace bandage the following morning and wear a bra after removal (sport bras are the most comfortable). If you had a Sentinel Lymph Node Biopsy your urine may be blue for a day as the dye is excreted. This is harmless—don't panic!

After you leave the operating room you will go back to ambulatory surgery where you'll stay until the nursing staff releases you. If you received an intravenous sedative they'll have you wait an hour or two before discharge.

#### **Pathology Report**

The pathology report is usually available within 48-72 hours. Either my staff or I will contact you with the results.

#### **Pain Medication**

You will be given a prescription for a narcotic pain medication (usually Vicodin) upon discharge. Most patients have very little pain and don't want the narcotic, but don't be afraid to use it if you are uncomfortable. Use a stool softener or gentle laxative, as constipation is not uncommon with narcotics. If you would prefer, you may substitute Tylenol or Ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil).

#### **Activity**

- You may resume normal activities the day after surgery
- You may begin arm exercises within a couple of days. Do these 2 or 3 times per day, beginning with light exercise and gradually increase your range of motion and repetitions. This will help your arm regain full mobility. If you had a drain placed at surgery you may begin light exercise within a couple days but minimize the amount of repetitious activity. Too much arm movement may lengthen the drain's duration.

### **Wound Care**

- You may remove the gauze dressing on the first or second postoperative day and then shower. Do not soak in bath tubs for 2 weeks after surgery.
- You should keep a gauze dressing on the wound until the wound is completely dry and without drainage—usually 2-3 days. This is done to protect your clothing.
- The wound is closed with absorbable sutures located under the skin; therefore, there will be no sutures to be removed.
- There will be narrow white tape strips over the wound (steri-strips) and these should remain in place for 7-10 days. We put sticky substance on the skin so that they stick well and will not come off easily in the shower. If they come off sooner than 7 days after surgery don't worry about it and if they don't come off within 10 days you may remove them yourself.

### **Drain Care** (only if a drain was placed at the time of axillary dissection or mastectomy)

- Empty the drain and strip the tubing 2-3 times daily, more often if the bottle fills up. This will prevent the tubing from clogging.
- Starting at the top of the tubing next to your body, firmly grasp the tubing with your index finger and thumb of one hand. With the other hand use the index finger and thumb to move the fluid down the tubing (this is called “stripping the tubing”).
- Uncap the pouring spout and squeeze the contents of the plastic bottle into the measuring cup.
- Squeeze the bottle to create suction and replace the cap while squeezing (flattening) to maintain the vacuum.
- Measure and record the output and discard the fluid into the toilet. Record the output each time you empty the bottle.
- Keep track of the output (drainage) and when the total is down to 30 cc's or less over a 24-hour period call to schedule an office visit and we'll remove the drain.
- Drain removal takes about 30 seconds and is virtually painless. The suture is cut and the drain slides out easily.

### **Office Visit**

- Call my office on the next business day after your operation to make a *post-operative appointment* for about a week after surgery, unless an appointment was made for you already. Make certain you mention that this is a post-operative appointment so that you are scheduled appropriately.
- Very important: notify my office immediately if your temperature is over 101.5F and/or you notice increased swelling, redness, warmth or drainage from around the incision or drain site.

**Dr. Ivanov's office number is (708) 229-4050**