

## Post Operative Guidelines

1. Take your medications as directed. Pain tolerance varies from one person to the next. Stay on top of your pain by taking your medication regularly for the first few days. Take your medications with food to decrease the chances of nausea. Keep track of your medications by writing down the time, name of the drug and number of pills taken. This is a good opportunity for your caretaker to assist.
2. **Rest for the first 24 HOURS** following surgery. **DO NOT** drive or drink alcohol while taking narcotic pain medication. You may walk and climb stairs slowly. No lifting anything greater than 10 pounds (approximately a gallon of milk) or any exercising for a minimum of 2+ weeks. The exact guidelines for return to activity will be provided by your surgeon. Elevate your head on pillows to decrease your swelling. **LISTEN TO YOUR BODY!** Everyone heals at different rates.
3. You may shower 24 hours after surgery. Keep your incisions clean and dry. Leave your surgical tape in place until your first post operative appointment. Your surgeon may remove your dressings and/or some stitches at your post-op visit. **DO NOT** submerge in a bath or swimming pool for a minimum of 3 weeks.
4. Call if you experience any excessive pain, bleeding, swelling, discoloration at the incision site, fever over 101 degrees F, breathing difficulties, chest pain, or any other concerning symptoms. Remember, scars take a year to fully mature and fade. Scars will continue to improve.
5. Compression garments (bras or girdles) help to reduce swelling and promote tissue retraction following certain surgeries. Wear it for about 1-2 weeks, around the clock, under clothing. Continue to wear your compression garment for another 2 weeks as much as possible to reduce swelling and fluid retention. The garment may be removed for bathing. The garment may also be loosened or adjusted as needed. These instructions will be provided by your doctor depending on the type of surgery you have. Hand wash your garment and **DO NOT** dry it in the dryer.