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DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER NIPPLE RECONSTRUCTION/NIPPLE GRAFT

- While the bolster (yellow dressing with yellow ties) is in place, you should not shower above the waist and the bolster should not get wet. Once I take the bolster off, you may shower and the nipple can get wet, although the water should not pour on the nipple with high pressure for 14 days after the surgery.
- After I remove the yellow bolster, wound care for the first 5 days will consist of antibiotic ointment (polysporin or bacitracin) followed by a non-stick dressing. We have found that a disposable circular nursing pad makes an ideal dressing. You should use two on each side. The first should have a nipple-sized hole cut in it to keep the nipple from folding back on itself and healing crookedly. The second will keep the ointment out of your bra. After you are no longer using ointments, then using two stacked nursing pads with central holes for 2 months will maintain shape and minimize overshrinkage. This is followed by a surgical bra. After 5 days, please substitute Aquaphor for antibiotic ointment.
- A skin graft always heals slowly, so the appearance of the graft is going to change week by week. For the first 2 – 4 weeks, you will have a lot of peeling of the skin and perhaps some drainage. At the end of the first month, you probably won't have any more drainage or peeling, but the color may not be uniform. This is especially true in people with darker nipple skin. The color in your nipple graft will return to normal over a period of time up to 6 months. Occasionally patients will lose color in their nipple grafts, and this can be reconstituted by tattooing in the office if necessary. If you have chosen an abdominal donor site, then you will definitely need a tattoo for color.
- The nipple graft does change week by week. Immediately **alert** me for redness of the breast spreading across the chest or an increase of drainage or a collection of fluid under the graft. This may look like a bubble or a blister. Otherwise, a little redness around the graft, a small amount of drainage, peeling of the skin and even some dark scabs on the nipple itself are all within the normal range of healing.
- If you have a leg incision, it will probably be the most uncomfortable part of the nipple reconstruction procedure. This incision is in the crease of your leg. Dermabond skin adhesive will have been applied on this incision to protect it. Do not apply any ointment to this wound while the Dermabond is in place as this will loosen the film before your

wound is healed. You may briefly wet the wound in the shower then gently blot with a soft towel. Often this area will develop some drainage. A dressing in this area is difficult. You may be able to solve the problem by wearing a sanitary napkin with “wings” such that the wings wrap around your panties and the napkin lies in the leg crease to help absorb any fluid. In addition to this, some patients find comfort by wearing loose panties with a long cuff (these may be ordered through JC Penney) or wearing pantyhose with no underwear until the wound is completely healed. Please **DO NOT** soak in the tub while these wounds are healing because the stitches are dissolvable, and I do not want them to dissolve prematurely.

- If you have an abdominal incision, you may keep a dry dressing on this area for 72 hours, and after that, only wear a dressing for comfort.
- Please do not do any strenuous exercises for several weeks, but I encourage you to walk as soon as you are able. The best way for you to heal faster and feel better sooner is to walk every day. You can rest afterwards, but walking will keep you from losing muscle mass, prevent clots in your legs and bring your energy level back sooner.
- **Smokers heal poorly in terms of infection and wound breakdown, and you are advised not to smoke at least 1 month before and after the surgery.**

PLEASE FEEL COMFORTABLE TO CALL OUR OFFICE IF YOU HVE ANY CONCERNS OR QUESTIONS. AFTER HOURS OR ON WEEKENDS, YOU CAN REACH THE DOCTOR BY CALLING 320-8545. **IN A TRUE EMERGENCY, CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.**