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What to expect and look for before and after Breast Augmentation.

The following information is designed to help you understand what to expect after your breast augmentation. This information supplements the “*Instructions Before Surgery*” and “*General Instructions for Postoperative Patients*” form.

Typical postoperative course (what to expect):

- **Pain.** Pain is highly variable patient to patient, but generally the first 2-4 days after augmentation have a fair amount of pain. Most patients use narcotics frequently during this time period, but by the end of the first week, most patients are taking just Tylenol.
- **Chest pressure** is common, especially when taking a deep breath, because the implants are pressing on the rib cage. They may give the sensation of mild shortness of breath, but if you feel like it’s actually hard to breathe, call Dr. Goldman.
- **Bruising.** Most patients have little bruising after breast augmentation, but this also varies from patient to patient.
- **Swelling.** Most patients do have a fair amount of swelling. The breasts generally feel very high, tight, and swollen right after surgery.
- **High implants.** In most patients, the pectoralis major muscles of the chest push the implants upward right after surgery. As the muscle stretches and relaxes and swelling resolves, the implants will settle. Implant massage may facilitate settling, and you will receive instructions on this at your first post-op appointment. Settling generally takes 6 weeks to 3 months.
- **End result.** It takes 3-4 months for the implants to settle and the skin to soften (after initially feeling stretched in many cases). However, most patients are close to their end result at 2-4 weeks.
- **Nipple sensation.** Increased sensation (hypersensitivity) and decreased sensation (numbness) are both common after augmentation. Hypersensitivity usually resolves in about 6 weeks, but numbness may take over a year to resolve, and can be permanent. Only a small percentage of patients experience permanent loss of sensation, but most patients have some transient change in sensation early after surgery.
- **Down time.** Most women take less than a week off of work or school for this procedure.
- **Stitches.** Dr. Goldman uses one stitch on each side that he removes about 7 days after surgery. The rest are dissolvable. All are underneath the skin and are covered with white tape (steri-strips) for 5-7 days. The tape is not to be removed at home but will be removed by the nurse at your first post-operative visit.

Instructions and precautions after surgery:

- **As mentioned in the general postoperative instruction sheet:** no aspirin, no NSAIDs, and also avoid Vitamin E, Fish Oil and homeopathic remedies for 2 weeks after surgery. You may shower in 48 hours.
- **Watch for excess swelling, bruising, pain.** In particular, call Dr. Goldman if one breast is significantly more swollen, hard, bruised, and painful than the other (which may represent bleeding) or more red, swollen, and tender (which may represent infection).
- **Arm range of motion of exercises.** Starting right after surgery, put your arms straight out at your sides and turn your hands in little circles, increasingly widening the circles, first one in direction, then the other. Do this every hour or so when you're not sleeping. This will keep the chest muscles from getting too tight, like a Charlie-horse after surgery.
- **Implant massage.** This is usually started on the first postoperative visit to help the implants settle and loosen the pectoralis muscles.
- **Exercise** may start gradually within days of surgery, whenever the patient feels ready. Use common sense, start gradually. Nothing strenuous, like jogging or weight lifting, should be performed for 2 weeks to minimize the risk of bleeding, but light activity, like an exercise bicycle, is acceptable in less than 2 weeks.
- **Steri-strips.** These are band-aid like adhesive strips used to cover and protect the incision. No antibiotic ointment is needed while they are in place. Once the strips are removed, antibiotic ointment, like Bacitracin, is used once a day for about 5 days.
- **Silicone gel.** Silicone gel ointment has been shown to reduce keloids, a specific type of thick scar. Dr. Goldman suggests that patients use this once a day, starting once the incisions are completely healed (when there is no residual crusting or scabbing, generally about 2 weeks after the surgery). Most patients use this for 3 months. It is available through our office.
- **Follow-up visits.** The first visit is generally in a week or less after surgery with our surgical RN, to check early healing and to remove one stitch from each side. The next visit is 2-3 weeks later with Dr. Goldman to check early healing. Subsequent visits are generally at the time points 6-8 weeks, 3-4 months, 6-9 months, and 12-18 months after surgery to follow healing.
- **Bras.** You will not wear a bra until cleared by Dr. Goldman. The implants need time to settle and you do not want to inhibit this by lifting the breasts with a bra. You can purchase a camisole (tank top without a shelf bra) or a loose fitting sports bra but must release the bottom by cutting in several places. This can be worn for coverage (in addition to the band) until Dr. Goldman gives you permission to wear a bra.
- **Prescriptions.** You will be given a pain prescription and antibiotic prescription the day of surgery. Your significant other that accompanies you may want to pick them up while you are in surgery. They may also want to pick up MiraLAX and Bacitracin ointment while they are at the pharmacy. You will be instructed on their use after your surgery.

Any questions before or after surgery please contact our office at 216-514-8899