

# WESTCOUNTRY

## PLASTIC SURGEONS of Washington University

Patient Information for :

### *GYNECOMASTIA*

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OR DAY/TIME: \_\_\_\_\_ PLACE: \_\_\_\_\_ ARRIVAL TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

During office hours, questions can be answered by our office staff at 314-996-8800. During off hours, please call Barnes hospital at 314-362-5000 and ask for the "Plastic Surgery Resident on call".

Please note that you can also have your non-urgent questions answered by emailing our Physician's Assistant, Emily Weinhaus through our website:

1. Navigate to: [www.westcountyplasticsurgeons.wustl.edu](http://www.westcountyplasticsurgeons.wustl.edu)
2. Click the "Ask Emily" button near the top, to your right. Emily's page will appear.
3. Click the green "Ask Emily" button. Fill in the required information and ask your question and we will respond within 3 business days.

This form can also be downloaded from our home page. To do this:

1. Navigate to: [www.westcountyplasticsurgeons.wustl.edu](http://www.westcountyplasticsurgeons.wustl.edu)
2. Click the "Patient Forms" button along the bottom of the home page.
3. This form is found under "Preparation / Care Sheets"

## BEFORE SURGERY

### SIX WEEKS BEFORE SURGERY:

1. **Smoking affects healing.** If possible, please try to stop smoking or using ANY nicotine products for at least 6 weeks before surgery and one month after. If needed, we can prescribe Chantix to help you quit.
2. **Good nutrition can help optimize wound healing and speed your recovery from plastic surgery.** To reduce the risk of problems, please be sure to consume a high protein diet and appropriately supplement any vitamin or dietary deficiencies that you may have.

### TWO WEEKS BEFORE SURGERY:

1. Some medications can interfere with anesthesia and cause undesirable side effects that could affect your surgery. Please read over the enclosed "**Medication and Supplement Alert List**" and let us know if you take any of them. For example, **garlic** and **ginseng can cause bleeding** even though they are homeopathic remedies and not true medicines. So please stop taking these, and any other non-prescription herbal medicines for two weeks before surgery. Also, Aspirin should not be taken 2 weeks before or after surgery. Tylenol is a good medicine to take for any aches or pains you may have prior to your surgery.

2. If you develop a cold, facial sore, or any other illness prior to surgery, please notify us.
3. If you are having surgery in our office or as an outpatient, please be sure arrangements have been made for a responsible adult to drive you to and pick you up after surgery.

#### **EVENING BEFORE SURGERY:**

1. Have some jello and/or soup available for after surgery.
2. Get a good night's rest.
3. Do not eat or drink anything after midnight if your surgery is scheduled before noon. Never eat or drink anything at all for at least 8 hours prior to surgery.

## **DAY OF SURGERY**

### **Be at the Hospital at:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do not eat or drink anything if your surgery is scheduled before noon. If your surgery is scheduled after noon, you may have coffee or tea and dry toast no later than 8 hours before your scheduled surgery time. **DO NOT SMOKE.**
2. Do not wear contact lenses, wigs, hairpins, hairpieces or jewelry. Dress in old, loose, comfortable clothes. Do not wear pullover tops or pantyhose. Remove all body piercing jewelry from all locations. Wear slip-on shoes.
3. Have someone drive you to your surgery and make certain someone will be available to take you home and stay with you for 24 hours. Put a pillow and blanket in the car for the trip home.

## **AFTER SURGERY**

1. **Supervision.** After surgery, it is important for you to have someone available to check on you or stay with you for the first 24-48 hours, as you may feel sore or weak.
2. **Diet.** A light diet is best for the day of surgery. Begin by taking liquids slowly and progress to soups or jello. You may start a regular diet the next day.
3. **Pain.** Most people experience muscle soreness as opposed to sharp pains for about 4-5 days after surgery. The pain medication we have prescribed should relieve your discomfort. You may take it every 4 hours as needed. It is best to take pain medication with crackers, jello, etc. Alcohol and pain medication should not be taken together.
4. **Activity.** It is important to refrain from any strenuous activities for at least 1 week after liposuction. If your gynecomastia surgery also involved our making a skin incision and cutting away male breast tissue and fat, then refrain from strenuous activities for 2 to 3 weeks. Gradually work back up to pre-surgical activities after 1 to 2 weeks if the gynecomastia surgery was performed with liposuction alone, and 3 to 4 weeks if skin and male breast tissue was removed with techniques other than liposuction alone.

5. **Compression girdle.** The girdle must be worn AT ALL TIMES except showering for FOUR WEEKS and then as much as possible including at night for another TWO WEEKS for a TOTAL OF SIX WEEKS.
6. **Showering.** You may remove the girdle to take a shower. You can put the girdle in the washer and dryer while you are showering and then put it back on immediately.
7. **Swelling and bruising** are a normal expectation following surgery. Bruising can be apparent for a couple of weeks and swelling for as long as 1-3 months afterward. The bruises and swelling will move down your body before being absorbed.
8. **Massage** to the surgical sites will help increase circulation and alleviate the hardness felt underneath the skin. The massages can begin 2 weeks after surgery.
9. **Altered Sensations After Surgery.** Some people experience an itching sensation and/or numbness following surgery. This will gradually subside over the next 2-3 months. If the skin was cut around the areola area (the pigmented region of the breast around the nipple) then numbness may be permanent or last for months to years.
10. **Treatment of Gynecomastia may require more than one stage.** Correction of gynecomastia involves the removal of fatty tissue that can be fibrous, the possible removal of a hard “disk” of breast tissue beneath the areola in some cases, and the reduction of the overlying skin that envelopes these structures. Fatty tissue is most commonly removed with ultrasound-assisted liposuction, and the overlying skin will contract over the removed fatty tissue to a variable extent. In some cases, it will be immediately apparent to your surgeon that ultrasound-assisted liposuction will be sufficient. In other cases, a different approach that involves surgically cutting away fat and breast tissue, the hard disk and/or skin will be recommended. But, in some cases it will not be obvious if liposuction alone will be enough. Liposuction is preferred as there are fewer scars so we will often try this first. If this is not enough, to achieve a better result and more skin reduction, a second, staged procedure may be recommended to optimize the result.
11. **Blood Clot Prevention.** If your procedure is performed under general anesthesia, and under local anesthesia in some cases, to reduce the risk of blood clots after surgery you will be treated with a drug called *Lovanox*. This drug, also known as *low molecular weight heparin* is injected under the skin of the abdomen daily for at least 5 days after surgery. If you undergo general anesthesia, you will also have specialized stockings on your lower legs that intermittently massage your ankles. These also reduce the risks of blood clots.

# RETURNING TO WORK:

## LIPOSUCTION ONLY :

1. Working from home : Less than 1 week.
2. Desk job : 1 to 2 weeks
3. Up on your feet a lot ; Manual labor : 2 to 3 weeks

## SKIN REMOVAL :

1. Working from home : Less than 2 weeks.
2. Desk job : 2 weeks
3. Up on your feet a lot ; Manual labor : 3 to 5 weeks

# GENERAL INFORMATION:

1. Strenuous activity that causes you to perspire or elevate your heart rate should be delayed for 10 days after surgery if you had liposuction only, and for 3 weeks if skin and breast tissue were removed through a surgical incision.
2. All incisions will be extremely sensitive to sunlight during the healing phase. Direct sun contact is to be avoided and use a sunscreen with SPF 20 or greater for at least 6 months. Excellent sunscreen options are offered through our various skin care lines.
3. Please take all medications carefully and as directed.
4. If you have nausea, vomiting, rash shortness of breath, or diarrhea after taking your medication, please call the office.
5. If you develop a fever (oral temperature greater than 101°F / 38.5°C), redness or increased pain at the surgical incisions, please call us immediately.

# FOLLOW-UP:

Follow-up after surgery varies based on the extent of the procedure, any pre-existing health conditions you may have, how far away you live, and in the unusual event where there is a complication.

For many patients follow-up includes :

- a) Follow-up within 7 to 10 days with registered nurse or physician's assistant to pull drains (if any), check wounds, and to address any minor questions or concerns
- b) Physician follow-up at 3 weeks, 3 months and 1 year and to address any concerns

# PRESCRIPTIONS:

We will try to provide you with prescriptions for medicines prior to your surgical procedure. Usually this will include a pain medicine, an antibiotic, and possibly lovanox to reduce the risk of post-surgical blood clots.

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