

WESTCOUNTRY

PLASTIC SURGEONS
of Washington University

Patient Information for :

NIPPLE RECONSTRUCTION



Dr. Terence Myckatyn &
Dr. Marissa Tenenbaum

NURSE / DR. TENENBAUM – Patty – 314-996-8133
Surgery Scheduling Secretary/Tenenbaum – Carol – 314-996-3040
NURSE/DR. MYCKATYN – Marilyn – 314-996-3201
Surgery Scheduling Secretary/Myckatyn – Michelle – 314-996-3028

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 our website (www.westcountyplasticsurgeons.wustl.edu) has detailed descriptions of most procedures. This form is available from our website by navigating to: Patient Resources > Patient Forms.

BEFORE SURGERY

SIX WEEKS BEFORE SURGERY:

1. **Smoking affects healing.** Please **stop smoking or 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, fever or any other illness prior to surgery, please notify us.

EVENING BEFORE SURGERY *IF YOU ARE HAVING GENERAL ANESTHESIA FOR THIS:*

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

Arrive at the Office or Hospital at: _____

1. **DO NOT SMOKE.**
2. Bring a loose fitting top, preferably one that buttons at the front. Bring a surgical bra or a sports bra without an underwire.

AFTER SURGERY

1. **Resting position.** While resting, keep your head and shoulders elevated on at least 2 pillows for the first 24 hours.
2. **Diet.** You may start a light regular diet if your procedure was performed under local anesthesia. A light diet is best for the rest of the day after surgery if you had general anesthesia for this procedure. If you had general anesthesia, begin by taking liquids slowly and progress to soups or jello.
3. **Pain control.** Pain is usually not a major issue with this procedure. However, if you have pain or discomfort, take pain medication every 4 hours. It is best to take pain medication with crackers, jello, etc. If you have no pain, do not take the medication. Alcohol and pain medication should not be taken together.

4. **Activity.** For the first 48 hours keep your arm movements to a minimum. Your arms should not be used to support your body or to lift anything heavy.
5. **Dressings.** We will put bulky dressings to surround and protect your nipples. These are stacks of gauze pads with a hole cut out of the middle where the nipple reconstruction goes. The gauze pads are secured to your chest with the surgical bra, and if required, surgical tape. The purpose of this dressing is for your bra not to crush your new nipple. **You should wear these protective gauzes for 4 weeks any time you wear a bra.** If you do not wear a bra and are wearing very loose clothes that do not put pressure on the nipple reconstruction, you can leave the protective gauze on. But, otherwise wearing a bra and the protective gauze is preferable.

Be prepared that you should wear these bulky dressings on your nipples for 4 weeks after the procedure when planning when to have your nipple reconstruction.

We will place polysporin cream and possibly a bismuth-impregnated dressing called *xeroform* on your nipple reconstruction under the bulky gauzes. These dressings should be re-applied daily under the bulky gauze dressings until stitches are removed 10-14 days later.

6. **Showering.** You may shower the day after surgery. The incisions can get soapy and wet, but avoid applying full showerhead pressure to them. Avoid soaking under water in a tub or pool.

OTHER POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

1. You may gradually resume normal daily activities after 24 hours, being careful to avoid any activity that causes pain or discomfort. Strenuous activities and exercises are to be avoided until 2 weeks after surgery. At that point, you may perform non-impact aerobics like the elliptical, stairmaster, arc trainer, or stationary bike. Running, impact aerobics, and light upper body work can start at 3 weeks after surgery depending on your comfort level. Start slow and progress as tolerated. Call your doctor if you have any questions.
2. Driving may be resumed within hours of nipple reconstruction surgery.
3. Mild bruising and swelling are normal. These will disappear with time.
4. If you have any questions, sudden onset of extreme pain, fever, or redness, please call Dr. Myckatyn or Dr. Tenenbaum's office at 362-4263 or 314-996-8800.

RETURNING TO WORK:

1. Working from home : 1 day
2. Desk job : 1 day
3. Up on your feet a lot : 3 days
4. Manual labor : 2 to 3 weeks

GENERAL INFORMATION:

1. **Nipple reconstructions tend to lose volume and projection or shrink after surgery**, particularly if you have had an implant-based reconstruction. For this reason we will ***oversize your nipple reconstruction intentionally***. The size of your nipple after reconstruction is bigger than what it will end up.

There are several options for adding volume to a nipple either preemptively (but these are not covered by insurance), or later on (may or may not be covered by insurance). These include synthetic cosmetic fillers like Radiesse, Cymetra, or Juvaderm, fat grafts, dermal grafts, or placement of an alloderm plug into a repeated nipple reconstruction. Not everyone is a candidate for repeat nipple reconstruction. We will be happy to discuss which, if any, of these options are available in your specific case.

2. **Areola reconstruction** (the pigmented circle around the nipple) is usually done with a tattoo (the alternative is a full thickness skin graft from the labia or groin area). Areola reconstruction follows nipple reconstruction by 6 to 8 weeks and is also done as an office procedure with minimal downtime.
3. All incisions will be extremely sensitive to sunlight for one year. Direct sun contact is to be avoided and use a sunscreen with SPF 30 or greater for the first 6 months and at least SPF 15 for the next 6 months. Excellent sunscreen options are offered through our various skin care lines.
4. Please take all medication carefully and as directed.
5. If you have nausea, vomiting, rash, shortness of breath, or diarrhea after taking your medications, please call the office.
6. If you develop a fever (oral temperature greater than 101), 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 10 to 14 days with registered nurse or physician's assistant to check wounds, remove sutures, 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
- c) Areola tattoo to be performed in 6 to 8 weeks after nipple reconstruction (also in the office)

PRESCRIPTIONS:

We will try to provide you with prescriptions for medicines prior to your surgical procedure. This may include an antibiotic.

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