

Do you want to know?

Mastectomy

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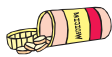
What is it?

Mastectomy is the surgical excision of breast tissue. It is of several types. Partial mastectomy involves the removal of varying amounts of breast tissue or cancerous cells (mass). Modified radical mastectomy involves removal of all breast tissue and the axillary lymph nodes.

What do you need to know?

Post-Surgery

Drugs



Take painkillers as prescribed by your physician.

Diet



Eat a high-protein diet with adequate calories. Protein is essential for rebuilding tissue. Protein sources are cheese, meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and labneh.

Activity



Alternate periods of rest and activity are needed to preserve energy and at the same time to prevent complications of bed rest.

Therapeutic/Preventive Measures



- Elevate the arm of the affected side moderately.
- Change wound dressing as instructed by your physician. A clean dressing minimizes the risk of wound infection.
- A surgical drain may be inserted to prevent fluid from accumulating under the chest wall incision.
- You may be discharged home with a drain in place that your doctor will remove when the secretion is minimal.

- Protect operated area from injury. Sensation may be decreased in the operated area because the nerves were disrupted during surgery, so gentle care is needed.
- Observe the wound for any sign of infection. Report to your physician any redness, swelling, drainage, or foul smell which may indicate wound infection.
- Avoid wearing anything that might irritate the incision until the wound has healed, generally in 6 to 10 weeks. Wearing a bra depends on the extent of the surgical procedure. In case of partial mastectomy, you may wear a bra to prevent the motion of the breast.
- Massage the area gently with vitamin E or other lotions after surgical site heals appropriately. This helps in promoting circulation and increasing skin elasticity.
- Consider breast reconstruction if needed depending on the procedure performed. Joint Stiffness and Contractures (a permanent tightening of the muscle that prevents normal movement of the extremity)
- Introduce exercise gradually to the affected extremity to increase muscle strength, prevent contractures, and prevent joint stiffness. Exercises may be initiated by a physiotherapist.
- Avoid exerting pressure on the drain and incision site and avoid any excessive exercise that could lead to fatigue.
- Begin exercise on the first day after surgery. It improves circulation in the lymphatic vessels.
- Perform hand exercises by doing self-care activities such as brushing the teeth, washing the face, and combing the hair.
- Perform exercises of upper extremities as if you are "climbing the wall" with the fingers in order to prevent contractures.

Lymphedema

Lymphedema (accumulation of fluid in the arm) may develop if axillary lymph nodes and the lymphatic system were removed and the functioning of lymphatic

The content of this educational leaflet is of general information. Ask your physician or health care provider if this content applies to you.

Prepared by the Nursing Services in coordination with other health care disciplines.

