

## PRE-OP INSTRUCTIONS FOR BREAST RECONSTRUCTION WITH YOUR OWN TISSUE

### FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS / IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- If you have any questions before your surgery in regards to surgery time, tests and paperwork
  - **Ana** – (Dr. Buchel’s Cancer Care Clinic Nurse) at **(204) 787-4193**
  - **Sarah** – (Dr. Hayakawa’s Cancer Care Clinic Nurse) at **(204) 787-4194**
- Your follow-up appointments may be given to you before you leave the hospital. You will see the *Plastics Nurse in one week* and your *Plastic Surgeon in two weeks*. If it is not provided to you at the time of discharge, you can call the following numbers:
  - For patients of **Dr. Buchel** – please call **Tora** at **(204) 787 – 7224**
  - For patients of **Dr. Hayakawa** – please call **Mandy** at **(204) 787 – 7158**

\*\*\* The follow-up clinic for your doctor and nurse is located at:  
**800 Sherbrook Street in the Rehabilitation Hospital 4<sup>th</sup> floor**  
(take the Magenta Fox elevators up to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor).\*\*\*
- The nurse office hours are Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 4:00pm (excluding statutory holidays). If you have any questions or concerns after your surgery, and would like to speak to the Plastics Nurse Clinician, you may call them at the following numbers:
  - **Heather** (Dr. Buchel’s Nurse) – **(204) 787 – 8830**
  - **Laura** (Dr. Hayakawa’s Nurse) – **(204) 787 – 8829**

***For urgent concerns after hours please call hospital paging at (204) 787 – 2071 and ask to speak with the Plastic Surgery Resident on call or come to the HSC Emergency Department.***

### BEFORE SURGERY

#### **PRE ADMISSION CLINIC**

Due to the length of the surgery, the Anesthesia Department reviews your chart prior to your surgery. If you have any pre-existing medical conditions the “**Pre Admission Clinic**” (PAC) will contact you to set up an appointment for an assessment approximately a week before surgery with the anesthetist. If you have not heard from this department, it means you are safe to have surgery and do not have any risks for an anesthetic.

## **GARMENTS**

- **The following garments need to be purchased and brought with you to the hospital the day of the surgery:**
  - DIEP/SIEA /DCIA(abdominal tissue) and Lumbar Artery flap patients will require:
    - Two surgical bras
    - Two abdominal binders
  - TUG AND SGAP/IGAP (thigh or buttock tissue) patients will require:
    - Special compression girdle
    - Soft cup front closing bra with no underwire
- These garments provide support to the new flap and apply compression to the tissue and donor site to speed healing after surgery. If you have any issues obtaining these garments, please call the clinic.
  - \*\*\***Note:** The garments are covered if you are on Social Assistance or Welfare. Please contact **Stephanie Howard** (Social Worker) at **(204)258 – 1004** for assistance with the paperwork.
- Please bring these new garments with you to the hospital. you will need to wear them for **up to 6 weeks** after your operation.
- Garments may be purchased at the following locations, or any medical supply store.
  - **Diamond Athletics Medical Supplies Inc.**  
Suite 185 – 75 Poseidon Bay  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3M 3E4  
(204) 488 – 7820  
[www.diamondathletic.com](http://www.diamondathletic.com)
  - **Steven’s Home Medical Supplies Store**  
SR140 – 700 William Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3E 0Z3  
(204) 787 – 3532
  - **The Unexpected Gift**  
1116 Portage Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 0S7  
(204) 890 – 6599  
[www.theunexpectedgift.ca](http://www.theunexpectedgift.ca)

## **THE NIGHT BEFORE SURGERY**

- **Do not consume any solid foods after midnight.**
- **You may drink clear fluids up until 2 hours prior to your arrival time.**  
(Examples: water, apple and cranberry juice, clear tea (no milk, cream, powder creamer), clear broth.
- Do not consume any alcohol 24 hours before your surgery.
- Please refer to pamphlet **“Adults preparing for Surgery at HSC”** for further information.

## ON THE DAY OF SURGERY

- Please cleanse the operative site with soap and water prior to coming to the hospital.
- Please remove any nail polish, makeup, and jewelry, including body piercings, and leave them at home.
- Bring your personal medications.
- Please refrain from bringing any valuables to the hospital. We are not responsible for any lost or stolen belongings.
- Bring your **Manitoba Health Card** and **both sets of your surgical bra and binder**.
- Please register at the **Admitting Department 2 HOURS** prior to your scheduled time of surgery (near the 700 William Avenue entrance).
- Once you receive your patient identification bracelet, you will be directed to the **Day Surgery Area (MS3)** on the **3<sup>rd</sup> floor MS building** (Orange Bison Elevators 3<sup>rd</sup> floor).

## DAY SURGERY AREA (MS3)

- You will change into a hospital gown. All your belongings will be placed in a bag labeled with your name and transported to the ward you will stay at.
- **Vital signs** (blood pressure, temperature, heart rate, oxygen saturation) will be checked.
- The nurse on MS3 will take a brief history and will make sure all the tests and paperwork are done and with your chart before surgery.
- **TED stockings** will be placed on your legs to prevent blood from pooling and forming clots in your legs.
- If the doctor has ordered any medications or antibiotics it will be given at this time.
- Family can stay with you in this area until you are taken to the operating room.
- ***Make sure to give the name of your contact person and let us know where and how to contact them during your operation.***

## OPERATING ROOM

When it is time for surgery, you will be transported on a stretcher to the **Pre-Operative waiting area** where you will meet your surgeon and anesthesiologist. Family is not allowed in this area they will be directed to the **Visitors Lounge** located on the **2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Ann Thomas Building**.

### **You will then be transferred to the operating room where:**

- An **IV** will be established for administering medications and the anesthetic.
- **Leads** will be put on your chest to monitor your heart rate.
- A **breathing tube** will be inserted and you will be ventilated.
- A **catheter (foley)** will be inserted into the bladder.
- **SCD (sequential compression device)** will be applied over your support stockings. They are also used to prevent blood from pooling and forming clots in your legs. You will continue to wear them during your hospital stay until you are ambulating well.

## POST-SURGERY

Once your surgery is finished, you will be transferred to the **Recovery Room (PACU)**. Your family is not allowed in this area. However, there is a phone in the Visitor's Lounge your family/friends may use that is directly connected to the recovery room. They may use this phone to get an update of your status/condition.

- You are usually in the recovery room for **approximately 2 hours**.
- Once you are stable, you will be transferred to the ward **GH5 – Plastic Reconstruction, Burns, Head & Neck Oncology** (General Hospital 5<sup>th</sup> floor “Green Owl Zone”)
- Once you are admitted to the ward, your nurse will do an initial assessment and get you settled before your family and visitors are allowed in to visit. Please have family/visitors report to the Nursing Desk on arrival.

## WHAT TO EXPECT POST-SURGERY

- You will have **dressings** over all the incisions sites.
- You will have drains:
  - **1** → drain to each reconstructed breast.
  - **2** → drains to the hips (1 on each side)
  - Possibly another drain in the breast if you had your lymph nodes removed.
- You will have a **blue stitch** on your breast flap(s) that locates the connection of the blood vessels under the tissue.
  - The nurses will frequently use a **doppler ultrasound device** to listen to the sound of the blood flow at this spot every hour on the first night.
  - They will also monitor the **color, temperature, cap refill, and feel of your flap**.
  - Your team of doctors will be notified immediately if there are any concerns.
- During the first night after the operation, you will not be allowed to eat or drink because if there are any complications with the flap, you may need to be taken back to the operating room to correct the problem.
- **Pain medication** will be available through your IV. A pump is attached which allows you to self-administer a dose of pain medication as you need. An IV- **Antibiotic** will also be given to you during your stay in the hospital.
  - Once you are allowed to eat, pain/antibiotic medication will be given in pill form.
  - A prescription for pain/antibiotics medication will be given to you upon discharge.
- You will also receive a subcutaneous injection three times per day called **Heparin** which helps prevent blood clots.
- You will continue to wear the **support stockings** while in hospital.

- **Constipation** may be an issue after surgery related to the pain medication, decreased mobility/activity, and the abdominal incision. Please drink plenty of fluids to keep yourself hydrated, eat a diet high in fiber, and take a stool softener until your bowel regime is back to normal.

## HOSPITALIZATION

Your stay in the hospital will be approximately **3 days** in length. It may be prolonged if the doctors are concerned about the flap.

- **DIAP/SIEA/DCIA (abdominal tissue donor site) and Lumbar artery Flap Patients**
  - **Day 1:** You will be allowed to eat and sit up in a chair a few times per day.
  - **Day 2:** You will be able to walk short distances a few times per day. Once you are ambulating well, the nurse will discontinue your foley catheter.
  - **Day 3:** If there are no concerns, you will be discharged. Often you will be allowed a short shower before you go home. Please try to arrange for a ride shortly after lunch.
- **TUG/SGAP/IGAP (upper thigh or buttock tissue donor site)**
  - You may be on bed rest and lying flat for 3 - 5 days on your back. You may be discharged 4 - 5 days after surgery and may be allowed a short shower before you go home.

## RECOVERY PERIOD

- Please expect to have a 6 – 8 week recovery period following breast reconstruction with your own tissue. Returning to regular activity will depend on how you heal and is different for everyone.
- We suggest that you have someone with you at home for the first few weeks after surgery to help with activities of daily living and meals. If you have any young children at home, please arrange for someone to help with childcare for at least 2 – 3 weeks.
- **If you live out of town (more than 2 hours away), your surgeon may request you to stay in Winnipeg until your first follow-up appointment (usually made for one week after your surgery date).** If you are unable to stay with any family/friends, please refer to the back of this page for suggested accommodations.

## ACTIVITIES/RESTRICTIONS POST-SURGERY

- **No heavy lifting** for 6 weeks.
- **You may have caffeine in moderation.**
- Smoking can increase the risks of complications during and after your surgery.  
**Please Avoid Smoking** or be near any sources of second hand smoke 6 weeks before and 6 weeks after your surgery.
- It is important to do short periods of light activity/walking 5 – 6x per day to prevent blood clots.
- You may climb stairs.
- You may drive as long as you are not on narcotics and feel safe to drive (usually about 2-3weeks)
  
- If you had a breast reconstruction done with an:
  - **ABDOMINAL DIEP/SIEA/DCIA FLAP:**
    - Maintain a bent forward (hips & knees flexed) posture for 2 - 3 weeks.
    - Sleep with your head and knees elevated for approximately 3 weeks
    - Do not lie on your side for about 3 weeks.
    - Avoid raising your elbows above your shoulder for 2 weeks
    - Wear a front closing wireless bra and your abdominal binder for 6 weeks
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  - **LUMBAR ARTERY FLAP:**
    - Do not lie on your side for 3 weeks.
    - Avoid raising your elbows above your shoulder for 2 weeks
    - Wear a front closing wireless bra and your abdominal binder for 6 weeks.
  
  - **INNER THIGH TUG FLAP:**
    - Please keep your knees together for 4 weeks and sit in a reclined leaning back position to avoid any tension on your inner thigh incision line.
    - Avoid raising your elbows above your shoulder.
    - Wear a front closing wireless bra and a compression girdle for 6 weeks.
  
  - **BUTTOCK SGAP/IGAP FLAP:**
    - Please lay flat on your back or stand straight for 4 weeks.
    - Do not sit to avoid any tension on your buttock incision line.
    - Avoid raising your elbows above your shoulder.
    - Wear a front closing wireless bra and a compression girdle for 6 weeks.

## POST OP COMPLICATIONS

- There are risks associated with any surgery. *General surgical complications include bleeding, infections, wound healing complications, etc.*
- Please be aware there is a small chance *your tissue transfer may not be successful*. If the blood supply to the tissue cannot be reestablished successfully, the tissue flap will not survive and will have to be removed from your body. If this does happen to you, your doctor can talk to you about trying to use tissue from another area of your body, using an implant, or doing no reconstruction at all and closing your incision.
- There is a risk of developing blood clots during and after surgery. A **DVT** ( Deep Vein Thrombosis) is a clot that develops in a deep vein in your body. It can be dangerous if it breaks off and travels to the lungs. A clot in the lungs is called a **Pulmonary Embolism** and can be life threatening. If you develop any pain and tenderness in your legs or arms, or any sudden chest pain or shortness of breath, you are advised to return to the hospital immediately for assessment and treatment.
- There is a chance of requiring a blood transfusion because of this type of surgery. Patients that have had neo-adjuvant chemo are at a higher risk of requiring a blood transfusion.

## DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

- A discharge instruction booklet will be given to you when you leave hospital. You will usually have at least two follow up visits with the plastics team within 2 weeks of being discharged.
- The follow up clinic is staffed by Plastic Surgeons, Nurses, Resident Doctors, and Physician Assistants. Medical students also attend the clinics. The clinics can run late so please always allow for extra time for parking. Your patience is appreciated as this clinic sees large volumes of cancer and traumatic injury patients.

For more information please visit our website at  
[www.breastreconstructionprogram.com](http://www.breastreconstructionprogram.com)

## ACCOMODATIONS

➤ **A Port in the Storm**

311 Alexander Avenue #101  
Winnipeg, MB R3A 0M9  
(204) 231 - 0720  
[www.aportinthestorm.ca](http://www.aportinthestorm.ca)

Port in the Storm is a medical hostel serving rural and northern citizens residing in Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario. Their goal is to reduce the financial burden of serious illness on those who must travel to and remain in Winnipeg for extended periods to receive treatment.

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➤ **Canad Inns Health Sciences Centre**

720 William Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB R3E 3J7  
Toll Free: 1-888-33-CANAD (22623)  
Local: (204) 594 – 9472

Attached to HSC, the 191 room hotel provides comfortable and secure lodging for patients, families, scientific researchers, and medical professionals. Canad Inns Destination Centre offers a special discounted rate for HSC patients and families.

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➤ **Lennox Bell Lodge**  
**Health Sciences Centre**

60 Pearl Street  
Winnipeg, MB R3E 1X2  
Phone: 204-787-4271

Lennox Bell Lodge is a unique hostel service which provides lodging for out-of town residents who come to HSC and Cancer Care Manitoba for treatment. Family and friends of inpatients or outpatients receiving treatment are also welcome.