

Breast Lumpectomy

AMBULATORY CARE:

What you need to know about a lumpectomy: A lumpectomy is surgery to remove a mass in your breast. Breast tissue that surrounds the mass may also be taken. A lumpectomy is also known as breast-conserving surgery, a partial mastectomy, or a segmental mastectomy.

How to prepare for a lumpectomy:

- You may need a mammogram or ultrasound before surgery. These tests may be done the same day as your surgery or at an earlier time. Your healthcare provider may use pictures from these tests to mark the location of the mass. The marker will show him where to make your incision.
- Your healthcare provider will talk to you about how to prepare for surgery. He may tell you not to eat or drink anything after midnight on the day of your surgery. He will tell you what medicines to take or not take on the day of your surgery. You may need to stop taking blood thinners or aspirin several days before your surgery. Arrange for someone to drive you home and stay with you for 24 hours after surgery. This person can help care for you, and monitor for any problems.

What will happen during a lumpectomy: You will be given general anesthesia to keep you asleep and free from pain during surgery. You may be given an antibiotic through your IV to help prevent a bacterial infection. Your healthcare provider will make an incision in your breast and remove the mass. He may also remove breast tissue or lymph nodes that are close to the mass. A drain may be inserted near your incision to remove extra fluid. This will decrease swelling and help your incision heal. Your healthcare provider will close your incision with stitches or strips of medical tape and cover it with a bandage. He may also wrap a tight-fitting bandage around both of your breasts. This may decrease swelling, bleeding, and pain.

What will happen after a lumpectomy: Healthcare providers will monitor you until you are awake. You may be able to go home when you are awake and your pain is controlled. Instead you may need to spend the night in the hospital.

Risks of a lumpectomy: You may bleed more than expected or get an infection. Nerves, blood vessels, and muscles may be damaged during your surgery. You may have swelling in your arm closest to the lumpectomy or where lymph nodes were removed. This swelling is called lymphedema. Lymphedema may cause tingling, numbness, stiffness, and weakness in your arm. This may be permanent. You may get a blood clot in your arm or leg. The blood clot may travel to your heart lungs, or brain. This may become life-threatening.

Call 911 for any of the following:

- You feel lightheaded, short of breath, and have chest pain.
- You cough up blood.
- You have trouble breathing.

Seek care immediately if:

- Blood soaks through your bandage.
- Your stitches come apart.

- Your bruise suddenly gets bigger.
- Your leg or arm is larger than normal and painful.

Contact your healthcare provider if:

- You have a fever or chills.
- Your wound is red, swollen, or draining pus.
- You have nausea or are vomiting.
- Your skin is itchy, swollen, or you have a rash.
- Your pain does not get better after you take pain medicine.
- Your drain falls out or stops draining fluid.
- Your drain has pus or foul-smelling fluid coming out of it.
- You have questions or concerns about your condition or care.

Medicines: You **may** need any of the following:

- **Antibiotics** help prevent a bacterial infection.
- **Prescription pain medicine** may be given. Ask your healthcare provider how to take this medicine safely. Some prescription pain medicines contain acetaminophen. Do not take other medicines that contain acetaminophen without talking to your healthcare provider. Too much acetaminophen may cause liver damage. Prescription pain medicine may cause constipation. Ask your healthcare provider how to prevent or treat constipation.
- **NSAIDs** , such as ibuprofen, help decrease swelling, pain, and fever. NSAIDs can cause stomach bleeding or kidney problems in certain people. If you take blood thinner medicine, **always** ask your healthcare provider if NSAIDs are safe for you. Always read the medicine label and follow directions.
- **Take your medicine as directed.** Contact your healthcare provider if you think your medicine is not helping or if you have side effects. Tell him or her if you are allergic to any medicine. Keep a

list of the medicines, vitamins, and herbs you take. Include the amounts, and when and why you take them. Bring the list or the pill bottles to follow-up visits. Carry your medicine list with you in case of an emergency.

Care for your wound as directed: If you have a tight-fitting bandage, you can remove it in 24 to 48 hours, or as directed. Ask your healthcare provider when your incision can get wet. You may need to take a sponge bath until your drain is removed. Carefully wash around the incision with soap and water. It is okay to allow the soap and water to gently run over your incision. Gently pat dry the area and put on new, clean bandages as directed. Change your bandages when they get wet or dirty. Check your incision every day for redness, pus, or swelling.

Self-care:

- **Apply ice** on your breast for 15 to 20 minutes every hour or as directed. Use an ice pack, or put crushed ice in a plastic bag. Cover it with a towel. Ice helps prevent tissue damage and decreases swelling and pain.
- **Rest** as directed. Do not lift anything heavy. Do not push or pull with your arms. Take short walks around the house. Gradually walk further as you feel better. Ask your healthcare provider when you can return to your normal activities.
- **Empty your drain** as directed. You may need to write down how much you empty from your drain each day. Ask your healthcare provider for more information about how to empty your drain.
- **Wear a supportive bra** as directed. Wait until you remove the tight-fitting bandage to wear a bra. You may be given a surgical bra or told to wear a sports bra. A supportive bra may help hold your bandages in place. It may also help with swelling and pain. **Do not** wear bras with lace or underwire. They may rub against your incision and cause discomfort.

Arm stretches: Your healthcare provider may show you how to do arm stretches. Arm stretches may prevent stiff arms or shoulders. You may need to wait until after your drains are removed to begin stretching. Do not do arm stretches until your healthcare provider says it is okay. Ask your healthcare provider for more information about arm stretches.

Follow up with your healthcare provider as directed: Write down your questions so you remember to ask them during your visits.

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