Anne Dancey
PLASTIC SURGERY

DIEP Flap Breast Reconstruction + Lymph Node Transfer Post-Operative Instructions

Sutures

The incisions are closed with dissolvable sutures that do not require removal. They are often hidden under the skin, so you will not see them and will dissolve naturally over a period of approximately 4 weeks, when the incisions are strong enough to support themselves.

Dressings

I use transparent glue and tape dressings (Prineo), which are waterproof and can be peeled off approximately 2 to 3 weeks after surgery, when they start to lift at the corners.

You can shower as soon as you like after surgery and do not require any dressing changes.

You may experience a small leakage of fluid or blood from the incisions. This is normal and to be expected with nothing to worry about.

Occasionally patients can be allergic to the glue, which causes itching and a red rash. If you suspect you have an allergy to the dressing, then please contact us so we can replace the dressing with an alternative and provide you with a mild steroid cream.

Support garments

You are required to obtain 2 support bras and 2 abdominal binders, as you will want one to wash and one to wear.

My nurse can size you in clinic and advise you as to which garments to purchase prior to surgery. You can either buy these from the hospital, or alternatively, we can provide you with the supplier details should you wish to obtain your own.

One will be applied on conclusion of the operation, so that you wake up wearing it.

They need to be worn day and night for 6 weeks after surgery, although you can remove them for washing.

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Medication

During your surgery I will use a long-acting local anaesthetic block around the nerves that supply your breast and abdomen. This reduces any pain that you may have for 72 hours after surgery, but you may need additional analgesia in the form of Tylenol and Ibuprofen. I will also prescribe Tramadol if you are in significant pain, but most patients do not need this.

You will be given antibiotics to take for 10 days after your surgery, which reduces any risk of infection whilst the incisions heal. The medications should be given to you before you go home, so please check with the nurse if you do not receive anything.

The hospital will provide you with TED garments to wear during and after your surgery to reduce the risk of a DVT in your legs. It is recommended that you continue to wear them until you are fully mobile. You may also be given anticoagulants to take if you are at a higher risk of a DVT or PE, although most patients do not require this.

Scar advice

Once the dressings are removed, I recommend that you massage the incisions using small circular motions at least twice a day for 5 minutes. You can use any moisturising cream of your choice and apply firm pressure until it blanches.

The scars will also benefit from silicone scar gel (ScarAway® or Kelo-Cote®) twice a day, which will soften and fade them, as well as applying sunblock for 12 months to provide sun protection.

The ScarAway® can be purchased from Healthcare Pharmacy at Governors Square in Grand Cayman.

Follow up

Before you are discharged from hospital, you will be given a follow up appointment to see the nurse one week post-operatively.

I normally see you in clinic within 5 days of surgery and at each appointment following your procedure.

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You should also be given contact numbers in the event of any problems. If you have any questions or concerns about your recovery, please do not hesitate to phone or email me and I will endeavour to respond to you the same day.

If it is more urgent, please contact the clinic/hospital. In the unlikely event of an emergency, you must visit your closest Emergency Department.



I hope you find this information useful. If you have any questions or require a little more information, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Anne Dancey

Dr Anne Dancey

Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon FRCS(Plast), MBChB(Hons), MmedSci(Hons) and MCh(PASP)

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