

Instructions for Recovery After Breast Surgery

1. Stop smoking/vaping/using nicotine products at least 6 weeks prior to surgery and for at least 4 weeks after. Cigarette smoke decreases the oxygen delivery to tissues trying to heal after surgery, and nicotine decreases blood flow to fragile tissues. This can harm the healing process and cause significant complications. Talk to Dr. Owens about your smoking/vaping habits and develop a plan to quit that allows you to minimize problems after surgery.
2. Please avoid aspirin-containing or ibuprofen-containing medications for at least 2 weeks prior to surgery. These medicines may increase your risk of bleeding. Other medications and supplements to avoid include high dose (greater than 800 IU/day) vitamin E, ginger, turmeric, ginkgo, garlic, ginseng, St. John's wort, cumin and others. If in doubt, please hold any non-essential supplements for 2 weeks prior. Please be sure to discuss all prescription and over the counter medications with Dr. Owens.
3. If you are 35 or over, we recommend that you have a baseline mammogram performed prior to surgery if you have not already had one. In general, you will not be cleared to repeat your mammogram until at least 6 months post op, so if your last mammogram was longer than 6 months prior to scheduled surgery it may be advisable to have an updated one to avoid delays in routine surveillance. Please discuss any family history of breast cancer with Dr. Owens prior to surgery.
4. You may be given prescriptions for pain medication, anti-nausea medication, antibiotic, and muscle relaxers to be filled prior to surgery. Please have these filled and ready at home so you do not need to stop at the pharmacy after surgery. If you use any type of hormonal birth control method, it is important to know that antibiotics may interfere with their effectiveness and an alternative birth control method should be used for the entire cycle that is affected.
5. You may use ice to the surgical site after surgery, 10-20 minutes at a time with 10-20-minute breaks. Your sensation may not be normal, so it is important to avoid placing the ice directly on skin, so it is not damaged by the cold. Place ice packs over bra/dressings or use a cover over the ice.

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Breast Augmentation
Tummy Tuck
Eyelid Surgery
Facelift/Browlift
Breast Reconstruction

Breast Lift
Liposuction
Body Contouring
Breast Reduction
Botox/Fillers

6. Pain relief may be adequate with ice and over the counter medications, and we recommend using both ibuprofen (Advil) and extra strength acetaminophen (Tylenol) on a schedule beginning the day of surgery. You may either alternate ibuprofen 800mg three times daily with acetaminophen 1000mg three times daily or take them together three times daily. Use prescription pain medicine as needed for pain unrelieved by this regimen. In most cases you will need to take the narcotic on the first day or two and then should be able to taper its use while still using the over the counter medications. Please follow your regular doctor's advice about dosing of these medicines if you have any conditions that limit your ability to safely take them.
7. Bowel regimen: Anesthesia and medications can cause constipation, and we recommend using an over the counter stool softener (like Colace) and a daily dose of Miralax or fiber supplement to minimize the chances of developing this problem. In addition, hydrate well with 8 glasses of water or other non-carbonated liquids daily.
8. You will be given two support bras to use postoperatively. You may also feel free to purchase your own, provided it is supportive with some compression and opens in the front, with no underwires. You should wear the support bra day and night for at least 4-6 weeks. You will be given specific instructions at your post-operative visits regarding when you may switch to a regular bra. No underwire bras for first 3 months.
9. Expect some drainage from your incisions. Your incisions will be covered either in glue or paper tape steri strips. Leave these in place until they fall off on their own. You will have gauze pads over the incisions which you may change as needed. If drainage is excessive please contact the office for further instructions.
10. You may shower after 24 hours. If you have drainage tubes in place and implants were placed, please wait until drains have been removed before showering. Pat incisions dry. Avoid applying any topical lotions or ointments directly to incision line until at least 4 weeks after surgery unless you have been instructed otherwise.
11. You may begin driving after 2 weeks for breast lift or reduction procedures, or after 3 days for breast augmentation, or 24 hours after last narcotic medication dose, whichever comes last.



12. Expect to take between one week and 6 weeks off work depending on the nature of your job and the specific type of surgery you are having. If remote/telework is possible, that is preferred for the first 4-6 weeks. Please discuss any concerns about return to work with Dr. Owens at your preop visit.
13. Avoid raising arms over head (elbows should go no higher than shoulders) for first 4 weeks after surgery. You should not lift anything heavier than a coffee cup for the first week and heavier than 5 pounds for the next 3 weeks. Stretch through full range of motion after 4 weeks if cleared by Dr. Owens to do so. Begin walking immediately and you may do light lower body exercise like recumbent bike and lower body weight training at 2 weeks post op. No full impact/aerobic exercises before 6 weeks post op.
14. Begin scar massage and massage of the breast tissue at 3-4 weeks post-op. This may be done gently with cocoa butter or other preferred moisturizer, in the direction of the incisions. We will discuss this with you further at your follow up visits.
15. Avoid too much sun exposure, and after incisions are fully healed it is helpful to wear sunscreen over the incisions even under a swimsuit. UV light can leave scars red for longer and sometimes result in pigment changes that are permanent.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS NOT ADDRESSED ABOVE, PLEASE CONTACT US DIRECTLY AT 410.747.2020

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