

### Dear Patient:

Your doctor has scheduled you to have a mastectomy. A mastectomy is most often done for an abnormal breast biopsy. Prior to surgery, your doctor will have discussed the different options for removal of breast tissue.

### Before Your Surgery

- **DO NOT** eat or drink anything after midnight on the night before the surgery.
- A nurse anesthetist will visit with you regarding the general anesthesia you will receive during surgery. Please tell the anesthetist if you have dentures or partials.
- You may receive a sedative to help you relax prior to the surgery. This will be discussed by the anesthetist.
- You will have an IV started in the Same Day Surgery area.
- A member of "Reach To Recovery", a breast cancer support program, may visit you before and/or during your hospital stay.

### During Your Surgery

The surgery takes 45 - 60 minutes. You will have a heart monitor and blood pressure cuff applied, and a pulse oximeter (measures the oxygen in your blood) placed on your finger. When your doctor is ready, the anesthetist will give you medication through your IV which makes you sleep through the surgery. After receiving the anesthesia, your doctor will make an incision on your breast and remove the breast tissue. The lymph nodes on the outer edges of the breast and under the armpit may also be removed. Laboratory tests will be done on the breast tissue and lymph nodes which are removed. A drain may be placed into the surgical area to allow drainage of excess fluids. Your doctor will use stitches or staples to close the incision. A dressing will be placed over the incision site.

You will go to the recovery room to awaken from the anesthesia. You will be monitored in the recovery room for approximately 1 hour.

### After Your Surgery

- You will be taken to your room for further monitoring. You will be encouraged to cough and deep breathe every hour.
- During this time you will be provided with ice chips or water to drink. Your nurse will assist you to the bathroom. Please press your call light and ask for assistance when getting up.
- Your doctor may have you wear a special type of vest for support to decrease swelling and bruising around the incision and in the breast area. If your doctor does not order the vest, you will need to wear a good support bra.
- Use the arm on the side of the affected breast for activities such as brushing your teeth/hair, eating, and drinking. Do not push or pull with this arm.

If you have a drain: Your doctor may want the drain left in place from 2 days up to 2 weeks after your surgery. Leave the dressing on and keep it clean and dry. If you go home with a drain, instructions for changing the dressing will be given. Or your doctor may remove the dressing and drain while you are in the hospital. The doctor will remove the stitches or staples at your follow-up visit.

If you DO NOT have a drain: Keep the dressing clean and dry. The dressing will be removed after 24 - 48 hours. The doctor will remove the stitches or staples at your follow-up visit.

Pain / Medications: We want to help make this experience as pain-free as possible. You may receive pain medication through your IV by a medication pump which you control. If you continue to have pain, please ask the nurse for more medication. DO NOT ask your family to push the medication control button. This will allow the nurse to better evaluate your pain.

If you do not have a medication pump, your doctor will have pain medication available to you upon request.

Diet: You will be given ice chips after your surgery. These will help to keep your mouth and tongue moist. The first diet your doctor orders will include clear liquids such as sprite, jello, broth, decaf coffee, etc. If tolerated, your diet will progress to a normal, well-balanced diet.

Activity: You will be encouraged to be active after your surgery. The night of surgery your nurse will begin your activity by having you sit on the side of your bed, sitting in a chair, and walking to the bathroom. Walking about in the room or down the halls also speeds the healing process as well as decreasing complications associated with surgery.

You will be encouraged to elevate your arm and hand, on the side of your mastectomy, on pillows to decrease the swelling.

Physical Therapy: Your doctor may order you to have physical therapy to help you with exercises. These exercises will help to maintain movement of the arm on the surgical side.

“Reach To Recovery” is a support program for those having breast cancer. These volunteers are breast cancer survivors who have had a mastectomy or a lumpectomy. In addition to being a source for information regarding the physical and emotional aspects of having a mastectomy, they will also talk about activities after a mastectomy as well as breast prosthesis.

Dismissal: You will need to have someone drive you home from the hospital. Please remember that you may still feel sleepy/tired when you go home. Go directly home and keep all follow-up appointments with your doctor. You should not drive until you have been released to do so by your doctor.

### **After Dismissal:**

Activity: You will be encouraged to continue walking when you go home. Short walks several times a day will speed up the healing process. You may tire easily and will need to rest 15-30 minutes between activities. **Do not** perform any strenuous activity such as lifting anything heavier than 10 lbs. You may resume normal activities when permitted by your doctor.

Incision: Keep the incision clean and dry. You can continue to shower, remembering to pat dry around the incision. Do not soak in the tub. **BE SURE TO LOOK AT YOUR INCISION EVERY DAY.** Notify your doctor if you notice bruising, redness, drainage, or increasing pain. You may want to place a light dressing or handkerchief over the incision to decrease irritation from the staples.

Pain/Medications: Your doctor may give you a prescription for pain medication to take at home. Take as directed. **DO NOT** take with alcohol. A non-aspirin pain reliever, such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen, may also be used for pain. If an antibiotic is prescribed, continue taking the antibiotic until it is gone.

Infection: If you have any of the following, call your doctor.

- ☐ Redness or swelling around the incision
- ☐ Yellowish, green or foul smelling drainage from your incision
- ☐ Steady bleeding from your incision
- ☐ Temperature above 101E
- ☐ Chills or other flu like symptoms
- ☐ Persistent nausea and vomiting
- ☐ Chest pain, trouble breathing, or difficulty urinating

Please refer to your dismissal instructions for further information.