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INSTRUCTIONS AFTER A MASTECTOMY

You need to be seen about 1 week after your operation or sooner if there is an issue.

Ring Fitzpatrick House on 51444555 to make or check that an appointment has been made.

A mastectomy is accomplished by removing breast tissue creating skin flaps which need to adhere to the underlying chest wall. External compression with a breast binder or similar garment is used to limit post-operative bruising or bleeding by applying external compression to the wound.

The wound may extend into the armpit called the axilla and lymph nodes may have been removed along with the breast tissue.

In general, medical procedures such as the taking of blood, intravenous cannulation and infusions as well as the taking of blood pressure are avoided using the affected arm because of the risk of introducing infection into an arm which has had axillary surgery to remove lymph nodes.

The wound and the dressing need to be kept dry and clean. Water is not sterile and a wet, damp or bloodstained dressing can create a wound infection.

Do not shower, keep the dressing clean dry and intact. It is awkward but worth the effort. Contrary to popular belief waterproof dressings are not really waterproof. You can undertake general daily hygiene measures using a flannel.

Breast operations are usually not painful despite the long wound or incision and Panadol or Panadeine 2 tablets 4 hourly as required should be adequate. If you are uncomfortable despite pain relieving measures seek attention sooner.

In the few weeks after the operation contact should also be made with a breast care nurse who can advise about after-care and the choices available for breast prosthetics and other options.

**IF A PROBLEM OCCURS,
CONTACT FITZPATRICK HOUSE DURING BUSINESS HOURS
OR GO TO ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY AT A PUBLIC HOSPITAL**