

# After LICAP Flap Breast Reconstruction

## Self-Care at Home



*This handout explains what to expect, how to prepare, and how to plan for your recovery after lumpectomy with LICAP reconstruction.*

## What is LICAP?

The LICAP, or *lateral intercostal artery perforator flap*, is a method of reconstructing the breast. The procedure uses skin and fat from the side of the chest, near the armpit. It is used to reconstruct breast defects following lumpectomy.

## Incision Care and Healing

- You may be given a surgical bra. If this is the case, wear the surgical bra for 4 weeks after your surgery as comfort allows. Remove it for showering and laundering.
- If you are not provided with a surgical bra, you are welcome to wear a non-compressive bra or camisole (no underwire).
- Remove the outermost dressing on your breast 48 hours after surgery. Do this before you shower for the first time.
- If your incision has thin strips of Steri-Strips (white tape) over it, leave them on until they fall off. If the Steri-Strips are still on when you come to the clinic for your first follow-up visit, your provider will remove them.
- You may experience numbness at your surgical site for 4 weeks or longer. Your breast may be bruised and swollen.

## Drains

If you have drains placed at the time of surgery, we will teach you how to care for them. Please read the handout “Closed Bulb Drain Care: For a Jackson-Pratt (JP) or Blake drain” to learn more.

## Hygiene

- Take a shower 48 hours after surgery. We recommend daily showers after that to reduce risk of infection.
- Use mild soap and wash very gently over your incisions.
- Do not take a bath, sit in a hot tub, or go swimming until your incisions are fully healed and no scabs remain. This may take 4 to 6 weeks.

## Sleep Position

- Sleep on your non-surgical side or on your back for 4 weeks after surgery.



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of this handout.

- Sleep with your head slightly raised. It may be helpful to stack pillows or use a wedge pillow. You may also sleep in a recliner to keep your head raised.

## Activities and Return to Work

- For **4 weeks**, move your arms gently:
  - Do not raise your arm above shoulder height on your surgical side.
  - Do not lift, push, or pull anything that weighs more than 8 pounds (about the weight of a gallon of water). This includes children and pets.
  - Avoid repetitive arm movements such as chores (vacuuming, doing dishes, and laundry).
- Avoid aerobic exercise (activities that cause heavy breathing or sustained elevated heart rate).
- Walking is encouraged and is helpful for healing and rebuilding strength. Start with 3 to 4 walks a day for 5 to 10 minutes each. Gradually increase your distance and length of time as you heal.
- Returning to work varies from person to person and depends on the type of work you do. Please discuss what may be best for you with your surgeon.

## Pain Control

- Please read the handout “Pain Control After Reconstructive Surgery.”
- Please do not use ice or heat directly on your surgical sites.

## When to Contact the Care Team:

Call your care team **immediately** if you have:

- Bleeding or drainage that soaks your dressing (hold pressure on the site to lessen bleeding)
- A fever higher than 100.5°F (38°C)
- Shaking and/or chills
- Any signs of infection at your surgical site
  - Redness
  - Increased swelling
  - Bad-smelling drainage
- Pus or cloudy, colored drainage
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- New rash
- Pain that is worsening and is no longer helped by your pain medicine

**If you are experiencing new chest pain or shortness of breath, call 911.**

**Redness, swelling, pain/cramp, or warmth, usually in one limb, may be signs of a blood clot. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, please go to your local ER.**

## Who to Contact

**During Clinic Hours (Monday through Friday except holidays, 8am to 5pm):**

If you have any questions or concerns, we recommend messaging your surgeon through MyChart. Please include a photo if it would help explain your concern.

You may also call the Center for Reconstructive Surgery at 206.598.1217 option 2.

**Urgent Needs Outside of Clinic Hours:**

If you have an urgent care need after hours, on weekends, or on holidays, please call 206.598.6190 and ask to speak to the plastic surgeon on call.