






# Axillary Node Dissection CareMap (with or without Breast Surgery)

Using LYMPHA (lymphatic microsurgical preventive healing approach)



| Before Surgery Day   | Day of Surgery   |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>7 Days Before</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Plan for your ride to the hospital and back home.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If you usually take blood thinners, talk with your care team. We may want to adjust your doses before and after surgery.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Stop taking NSAIDs (like ibuprofen and aspirin).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Stop taking all supplements. This includes any vitamins, minerals, and herbs you take.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Staff will give you instructions regarding any daily medications you take.</li> </ul> <p><b>2 Days Before</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Stop shaving near the surgery site.</li> </ul> <p><b>Day Before Surgery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> You will receive a call from the hospital with your check-in time.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take a shower with the antibacterial soap, as instructed.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Follow any other instructions you were given to prepare for your surgery.</li> </ul> <p><b>After midnight:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do <b>not</b> eat anything or drink any alcohol.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> You may drink clear liquids up to 2 hours before your arrival time.</li> </ul>  | <p><b>At Home</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Shower with the antibacterial soap, as instructed.</li> </ul>  <p><b>At the Hospital</b></p> <p><b>Before surgery:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Check in at the Surgery Registration Desk at or before your check-in time.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A nurse will call you to come to the Pre-op area.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> We will start an intravenous (IV) line to give you medicines and fluids.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> We will place a heating blanket on you while you are waiting to go into the operating room (OR). Keeping your body warm helps lower the risk of infection.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> You will meet with:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An anesthesiologist to talk about anesthesia</li> <li>- A member of the surgery team so that you can ask questions and sign a consent form (if not already done)</li> <li>- Nurses to review your health history</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A member of the anesthesia team will take you to the OR.</li> </ul>  | <p><b>After surgery:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> You will:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wake up in the recovery room.</li> <li>- Have an IV in your arm for pain medicine and fluids, as needed.</li> <li>- Have drains to remove fluid from the surgery area.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  <p><b>Self-Care and Activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Move your arms gently:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do <b>NOT</b> raise the arm above shoulder height on the side of your surgery</li> <li>- Do <b>NOT</b> lift, push, or pull anything that weighs more than 8 pounds (1 gallon of milk weighs 8 pounds). This includes children and pets.</li> <li>- Do <b>NOT</b> do any strenuous activity, including household chores</li> <li>- Do <b>NOT</b> use the arm on the surgical side for blood pressure checks, IV placements, or lab draws.</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Empty your drains 2 to 3 times a day. Record the amounts in your log.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Keep all dressings clean and dry.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Eat a normal diet, as you can.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Start walking on the night of surgery.</li> </ul>  |

## At Home

Once your pain is under control, you will be discharged from the hospital. Your follow-up visit with your surgical team will be noted on your discharge instructions.

### Day 1

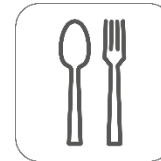
#### Medicines

- Your pain will be controlled by:
  - Acetaminophen (Tylenol) and/or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin)
  - Opioid pain pills, only if the other medicines do not ease your pain (always take with food)
- While you are taking opioids, also take the medicine prescribed for constipation (unless you have loose stools).



#### Diet

- Eat your usual healthy foods.
- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.



#### Self-care

- If you have dressings, leave them in place.
- Keep the drain sites clean. If you wish, lightly cover the drain sites with gauze and tape. For more details, read the "Caring for Your JP Drains" handout.
- Empty drains at least 2 to 3 times a day or when they get half full. Record amount for each drain SEPARATELY in your log.

#### Activity

- Walk at least 4 times a day. Start with short walks, 10 to 15 minutes long.
- Do **not** drive while you are taking opioids.
- Arm-use precautions:** For **4 weeks**, move your arms gently.
  - Do **NOT** raise the arm above shoulder height on the side of your surgery.
  - Do **NOT** lift, push, or pull anything that weighs more than 8 pounds (1 gallon of milk weighs 8 pounds). This includes children and pets.
  - Do **NOT** do any strenuous activity, including household chores.
  - Do **NOT** use the arm on the surgical side for blood pressure checks, IV placements, or lab draws.
- Read and follow the instructions in the handout "Stretches and Exercises."



### 48 Hours After Surgery

- If you have dressings, remove the outer bandages from breast and armpit. Leave the white Steri-Strips in place.
- After removing the dressings, you may shower. Gently pat the Steri-Strips dry.

## Week 1

#### Medicines

- Pain controlled by:
  - Acetaminophen and/or ibuprofen
  - Opioid pain pills, only as needed (always take with food).
- Begin to taper your opioid dose.
- While you are taking opioids, keep taking the medicine prescribed for constipation (unless you have loose stools)

#### Self-Care and Activity

- Walk every day, going farther each day.
- Continue to follow arm-use precautions.
- Read and follow the instructions in the handout "Stretches and Exercises." Move your arms gently.
- Empty drains 2 to 3 times a day. Record amounts in your log separately. Bring the log with you to your clinic visit.
- Do **not** drive while taking opioids.

#### Follow-up Visits

Visit with breast surgeon or Advanced Practice Practitioner (APP) 1 to 2 weeks after surgery:

- Talk about pathology report (you may receive results by phone before this visit)
- Drain will be removed if output is low enough.
- If needed, talk about seeing medical or radiation oncologist for more treatment.
- Receive prescription for physical or occupational therapy – **do NOT start therapy until at least 4 weeks after surgery.**

## Weeks 2 and 3

### Medicines

- Pain controlled by:
  - Acetaminophen and/or ibuprofen
- Goal is to be off opioids by now.

### Self-Care and Activity

- Walk every day, going farther each day.
- Arm-use precautions: For 4 weeks**, move your arms gently.
  - Do **NOT** raise the arm above shoulder height on the side of your surgery. (If your care plan includes radiation therapy, you can start to raise your arm above shoulder height after 3 weeks.)
  - Do **NOT** lift, push, or pull anything that weighs more than 8 pounds (1 gallon of milk weighs 8 pounds). This includes children and pets.
  - Do **NOT** do any strenuous activity, including household chores
  - Do **NOT** use the arm on the surgical side for blood pressure checks, IV placements, or lab draws.
- Read and follow the instructions in the handout “Stretches and Exercises.”
- If you still have drains, empty them 2 to 3 times a day. Record amounts in your log separately. Call the clinic to have them removed when output is less than 30 mL in 24 hours for 2 days in a row.
  - If you have tissue expanders placed at the time of surgery, your output goals for drain removal may be different. Call your care team if you have any questions.
- If you have stopped taking opioids, you can drive if you feel up to it.



## Week 4

### Medicines

- Pain controlled by acetaminophen and/or ibuprofen.

### Self-Care and Activity

- Walk every day, going farther each day.
  - Until you see a physical or occupational therapist (PT/OT), keep following the instructions in the “Stretches and Exercises” handout.
  - Do **not** use the arm on the surgical side for blood pressure checks, IV placements, or lab draws.
- When your surgeon says it is safe:
- You may start physical or occupational therapy and massage.
  - Start using your arms more fully. There are no limits on how much weight you can lift, push, or pull.
  - Start doing more exercise. Build slowly. Let your body guide you. If what you’re doing hurts, slow down or stop!



### Questions or Concerns?

Your questions are important. Call your care team if you have questions or concerns.

- **UWMC Breast Surgery Clinic - Northwest Campus:** 206.668.6746
- **UWMC Center for Reconstructive Surgery:** 206.598.1217
- **FHCC Breast Health Clinic:** 206.606.7563

For urgent needs, call the hospital operator at 206.598.6190. Ask to speak with the provider on call.