



The Benign or Worrisome Lump

Excisional breast biopsy: What to Expect at Home

Your Recovery

General information:

You will likely be quite sore for several days following surgery. You may also feel more tired than usual. The skin around the cut (incision) may appear pink or slightly red, may feel firm, swollen and tender, and your breast may be bruised (discolored). The pain is not usually severe, and the worst of it should improve in 2 or 3 days, with the tenderness and firmness resolving over the next several weeks.

You may feel a lump in your breast that seems to develop after surgery. This is the incision within the breast healing. It is swollen and sometimes firm. It is not cancer.

You will likely be able to return to work, or your normal routine, 1 to 3 weeks after the surgery. This often depends on how sore you are and what type of work or activity you do. However, this may depend on whether you have more treatment to undergo. Typically, the more you move your arm and shoulder the more sore you will feel in the first month. Please ask your surgical team if you have specific questions.

***Note: if you develop a lot of bruising (dark discoloration) throughout your breast and your breast seems to be enlarging, please call us promptly at 208-392-3354.**

Instructions to care for your wound at home:

1. Shower or sponge bath the night of surgery, or the day after, to clean off the skin-prep used in surgery. This may reduce the chance of a rash.
2. Keep the incision(s) clean and dry throughout the day. Leave the skin glue in place for at least 10 days – don't pick at it or pull it off early. You may opt to leave it alone until it begins to flake off. This is fine and may take more than a month to fully come off.



3. Wear a post op bra, sports bra, or binder/compressive garment day and night for at least 1 week, preferably for 2 weeks. This is to help keep you as comfortable as possible. The weight of the breast pulling on the incision can cause a deep aching pain and is especially bothersome at night for many women.

*You may replace the gauze with fresh gauze, or something soft, such as a clean, fluffy cloth, to provide comfort and soft compression over the wound. Placing an ice pack over the incision(s) for 15 to 20 mins at a time provides great pain relief, but please protect your skin from cold injury by wrapping the ice pack in a tee-shirt or thin cloth.

4. Don't lift more than 15lbs with the arm on the side of the incision for 2 weeks. Don't perform repetitive reaching, pushing, pulling, or repetitive shoulder motions in general. These movements tend to cause more pain after surgery.

5. Most people find that breast surgery isn't very painful, and often recall the needle biopsy feeling as bad or worse. They typically use one or two prescription pain medication pills, and then opt for ice packs and Tylenol/ibuprofen. For this reason, we are careful not to prescribe pain medicine that is unnecessarily strong and puts you at risk for side effects, when it is not needed.

Please consider that while we don't know your body like you do, we do know our profession very well and this is our best plan for getting you safely through surgery using as little medication as needed to allow you to rest and recover. Please trust our judgement.

- a. For pain control, start by using an ice pack placed over the sore spot for 15 minutes, as many times a day as you need. Keep a layer of cloth between your skin and the pack to protect you from injuring your skin.
- b. In addition to the ice pack, you may choose to alternate taking Tylenol and Motrin or Advil (ibuprofen) every 3 hours. For example, take Tylenol at 9am, then Motrin at 12pm, then Tylenol at 3pm, and so on. If stronger pain medication is needed despite the above measures, you may also choose to take an Ultram/Tramadol, but use it only when the other measures are not enough to allow you to relax and rest. Any, all, or none of these may be used for pain relief. If the pain is tolerable, or if you prefer, you may of course opt to not use any of these measures.

6. Please call us at 208-392-3354 to speak with a nurse about any questions or concerns you may have.

7. You will see Jay Burrup PA-C, or Dr Menen, 2 to 4 weeks after surgery for your follow-up appointment.