

GUIDELINES AND EXERCISES POST MASTECTOMY

After breast surgery, there are a few exercises you are required to do during and after your hospital stay to ensure you achieve full range of motion and strength of your shoulder.

- ❖ In the days after your surgery, it is important to practice DEEP BREATHING EXERCISES. These will help drain lymph as well as improve the expansion of your chest wall, particularly on the side of the surgery. This in turn can prevent the complication of a chest infection. No manual chest physiotherapy will be done on you.
 - Relax your shoulders and take deep breaths in, concentrating on expanding the lower part of your chest as much as possible.
- ❖ You are encouraged to use your elbow and hand as much as possible for your daily activities. **Please note: In the first 3 days post op, you are not allowed to move your shoulder, that includes not being allowed to push your drip stand or reach for anything off your bedside table. Your bedside table should be on the opposite side to your operated side.**
- ❖ Consult your doctor or physiotherapist regarding which exercises you can do after your operation. Your physiotherapist will go through the relevant exercises. It is important to remember that some exercises can only be done a few days after the operation. Please take note of them.
- ❖ You will be told which exercises to do on which day (see below):
 - **Days 1 – 3:** Hand pumping, all wrist and elbow movements allowed. No shoulder movement allowed, and arm must be kept against chest wall.
 - **Day 3:** Start pendulum exercises (see exercise sheet).
 - **Day 4:** Start shoulder flexion – must be **below** 90 degrees and progress all other exercises.
 - **Day 7:** Shoulder flexion and abduction allowed **above** 90 degrees and progress of other exercises.
- ❖ Full shoulder movement is achieved when you are able to reach across the top of your head and touch the opposite ear without feeling a stretch in the armpit. Your head should be upright. This should be 7 days after your operation.

DO'S AND DON'TS

- ❖ Keep your arm moving and use it for light tasks.

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- ❖ Carry your handbag on the other shoulder, or in your hand.
- ❖ Do exercises for at least 10 minutes a day, with 5 repetitions and up to 4 sets of each. Have a rest between sets and different exercises. Exercises should be done slowly and rhythmically.
- ❖ Return to driving only once you feel comfortable to do so.
- ❖ Do not keep arm in one position for an extended period of time.
- ❖ Do not carry heavy loads on the affected side.
- ❖ Do not have your blood pressure taken, or a drip inserted on the operated side during this hospital stay, or any future visits as this can cause swelling.
- ❖ Do not strain your shoulder and avoid over exertion.

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