

**Post-Operative DIEP Flap Instructions**  
Aesthetic and Reconstructive Plastic Surgery  
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1. You can expect to stay in the hospital 4-5 days. The first few days there will be close monitoring of the pulses in the transplanted breast/flap.
2. You will have several drains in place (often up to 6) to remove any excess fluid from the surgical sites and surrounding tissues. These will be emptied frequently in the hospital. You will be expected to empty and record the drainage of these at home. The nursing staff at the hospital will educate you and provide you with a measuring cup for home use. It is normal for the drainage in these to change in color, consistency and amount from bright or dark red to clear yellowish or pink. You will also have a urinary catheter in place for the first day or so. This will be removed when you are able to get out of bed with assistance to use a bedside commode.
3. Immediately post-op you will have IV fluids and an IV pain pump that you may control. If this is not controlling your pain, you need to let your nursing staff know right away. You will start on clear liquids and progress to a regular diet as tolerated. As soon as you are eating some regular foods, you will be offered oral pain medication and the IV pain medication will be weaned.
4. Your breasts and abdomen will be somewhat swollen and you will be instructed to sleep with the head of the bed elevated to assist in decreasing the swelling.
5. You can expect a long bikini line incision from hip bone to hip bone. It may have visible or internal sutures, and may or may not have staples. You will have a circumferential incision around the flap of the breast as well. An abdominal binder will be worn for 4-6 weeks.
6. Physical therapy at the hospital will provide you will some beginning exercises to help you maintain range of motion and strength after surgery. You will be expected to continue these exercises at home.
7. Once you are home, you will be permitted to shower. Use a mild soap without heavy perfume such as baby shampoo. Let the warm soapy water run over the incisions. Do not scrub the incisions or drain sites.
9. You will need to avoid lifting anything over 10 pounds for 4-6 weeks, and expect to limit your normal activities of daily living during this time. You will be much more fatigued than usual and will need more rest during the first few weeks post-operatively. You should not drive for 2 weeks until cleared by our office and you are off all narcotic pain medication.
10. Bruising, swelling, numbness, sharpness and burning are common after breast surgery. These will subside over the next few weeks.

***IMPORTANT-* Call the office or on call plastic surgery resident (317) 274- 5000 for any increased redness, swelling, foul-smelling wound drainage, wound separation, severe/uncontrolled pain or temperature >101.5.**

Do not hesitate to call for any other questions or concerns.

**\*\*A follow-up appointment will be scheduled after your discharge from a member of the plastic surgery team. You may also call the office at (317) 278-1022 to set up your appointment.**