



## DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS FOR MASTECTOMY/AXILLARY LYMPH NODE DISSECTION

**INCISION CARE:** Your incision may or may not have sutures that need to be removed after surgery. You may have small pieces of tape over your incision. Leave those in place. They will gradually come off on their own. A dressing over the incision is not necessary unless you are having some drainage from your incision. Use as little tape as possible as the skin is very sensitive. You may wash your incision lightly with soap and water and pat dry. DO NOT shower until your drainage tubes have been removed.

**DRAINAGE TUBE CARE:** Following surgery, a drainage tube is left under the skin and is connected to a collection chamber. This drain is to remove fluid that may have accumulated which can slow healing. This fluid may initially be bloody but with time will become more yellow in color. The collection chamber should be emptied twice daily with the amount recorded or when the drain is more than half full. A gauze dressing may be placed around the drain but this is not required. Please bring your drain output record with you to your follow up appointment.

**FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT:** When the drainage from the tube is less than 30cc's per day (1 ounce) call the office and make an appointment to get the drains removed. If on your 6<sup>th</sup> day after surgery the drainage is still above 30cc's, call for an appointment to be seen around your 7<sup>th</sup> day post op to check on healing of the incision. The drain tube may or may not be removed at that time.

Follow up appointment is scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_.

**PAIN MANAGEMENT:** A prescription for pain medication will be given when you are discharged from Tallgrass. As your pain diminishes, you can switch to Ibuprofen or Acetaminophen as needed. It is not unusual to experience some sensations of heaviness or tingling in the affected arm. This is due to the removal of the sensory nerve during surgery. This may take several months to go away. If you have had a mastectomy, you may experience some phantom sensations in the missing breast.

**ACTIVITY/EXERCISES:** You may use your arm in reduced daily activities such as grooming and light work such as preparing small meals. No heavy lifting or pulling with the affected arm. Reach for Recovery will provide a booklet on exercises. These should not be started until after removal of your drains.

### **REASONS TO CALL THE OFFICE AT 232-0444**

1. Pain not controlled with pain medication
2. Fever of 101 for 2 consecutive days
3. Nausea that does not subside after 24 hours after surgery
4. Redness or drainage from incision sites
5. The drain is clogged.
6. Development of increased swelling around the breast or axillary incision after the drain has been removed.
7. Any questions or concerns.

WE STRONGLY SUGGEST A RESPONSIBLE ADULT REMAIN WITH YOU AT HOME TODAY AND TONIGHT FOR YOUR PROTECTION AND SAFETY. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, OR IF A PROBLEM DEVELOPS, PLEASE CALL YOUR PHYSICIAN IMMEDIATELY. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO CONTACT YOUR PHYSICIAN AND YOU FEEL THIS IS AN URGENT SITUATION REQUIRING A PHYSICIAN'S ATTENTION, GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM CLOSEST TO YOU.

### DESIGNATED CAREGIVER CONSENT

I WILL BE THE DESIGNATED DRIVER OF THIS PATIENT AFTER DISCHARGE FROM TALLGRASS SURGERY CENTER. I AM FULLY AWARE THIS PATIENT NEEDS CAREGIVING ATTENTION FOR THE FIRST 24 HOURS.

X \_\_\_\_\_  
PATIENT/PATIENT FAMILY MEMBER

X \_\_\_\_\_  
REGISTERED NURSE