

## **DIEP Flap Breast Reconstruction Patient Care Instructions**

In this packet you will find essential information about preparing for your breast reconstruction surgery with Dr. Dec. Being prepared for surgery can reduce the risks associated with a medical procedure and increase comfort and convenience during the recovery process. If you have any questions that are not answered in this packet please call our office at (212) 390-8400 or visit [www.diep.nyc](http://www.diep.nyc)

### **Before Surgery**

It is very important for Dr. Dec and your anesthesiologist to review your list of medications and supplements before surgery. In general all cardiovascular, anti-reflux, seizure, psychiatric, bronchodilators, rheumatologic agents, thyroid medications should be continued.

Diuretics, potassium supplements, diabetes medications, oral contraceptives, tamoxifen, steroids, and medications associated with an increased bleeding risk will be considered individually. Common medications that increase the risk of bleeding and bruising include:

Advil / Motrin (Ibuprofen)	Heparin
Aleve / Naproxen (naprosyn)	Lovenox (enoxaparin)
Aspirin / Excedrin / Salicylates	Plavix (clopidogrel)
Celebrex (celecoxib)	Toradol (ketorolac)
Coumadin (warfarin)	Xarelto (ricaroxaban)

Some of these medications can be stopped safely while others should be continued.

Many herbal medications, vitamins, and supplements can interfere with anesthetics or increase the risk of bleeding; therefore all herbal medications, vitamins, and supplements should be discontinued one week before surgery.

Dr. Dec will prescribe medications to reduce discomfort after surgery.

Anytime you undergo a medical procedure under anesthesia, your general health condition must be considered. Depending on your age and the results of your History and Physical, you will need preoperative testing such as Blood Work, EKG, Chest X-ray and Medical Clearance. This is done to ensure that any other health problems do not put you at any additional unnecessary risk while under anesthesia.

Please make sure to inform us of any adverse reactions you may have had to anesthesia in the past. New medications are available to help prevent many of these reactions and will be administered on the morning of your surgery.

### 1-2 weeks Before Surgery

If instructed to, discontinue medications that increased risk of bleeding or bruising. Discontinue all herbal medications and supplements one week prior to surgery. Have your blood work, EKG, X-ray, mammogram, or medical clearance done (as applicable). Fax results to **(212) 434-6950**.

You will have a CT angiogram of your abdomen to help map the blood vessels that supply the tissue that will make the new breast. To schedule your CT angiogram appointment please call the radiology department at **(212) 434-2900**.

Arrange for someone to drive and pick you up from the hospital.

If you smoke, or use nicotine products, please stop 4 weeks before surgery.

Have stool softeners, such as Colace or Bisacodyl, available for your recovery. These can be purchased at your local pharmacy.

### The Day Before Surgery

You will receive a call to confirm the time and location of the surgery.

Wash your hair and shower with regular shampoo and soap.

Do not eat or drink anything after midnight.

### The Day of Surgery

Arrive to the to the hospital on time (typically 1.5 hours before scheduled start of surgery).

You may brush your teeth in the morning, but do not eat breakfast or drink fluids.

Do not wear makeup or hair products.

Wear loose and comfortable clothing; nothing that pulls over your head.

Do not wear jewelry / rings / watches or contact lenses.

Blood pressure and heart medications may be taken with a sip of water as directed.

If you are prone to nausea or motion sickness let your anesthesiologist know on the morning of surgery.

## AFTER SURGERY

Please follow these instructions closely unless specifically directed otherwise by Dr. Dec.

### Your Hospital Stay Days 1-4

As you wake up from your anesthesia, your vital signs will still be monitored closely for about an hour. You may be given additional medications for discomfort and/or nausea. Once you are awake and alert you will be transferred to a hospital room.

Your nurse will evaluate you and your breast reconstruction frequently to confirm that you are comfortable and the new breast has an adequate blood supply.

On the day following surgery you will be encouraged to sit up in a chair and walk around your hospital room. Your level of activity will gradually increase each day. By the time you are discharged you will feel very comfortable with getting around.

### Your Recovery at Home

Call the office if you have: severe pain that is not responding to medications, swelling that is greater on one side than the other, incisions that are red or warm, a fever greater than 101°, or if any other questions or problems arise.

If you experience any generalized itching, rash, wheezing or tightness in the throat, stop taking all medications and call the office immediately, as this may be a sign of a drug allergy.

Take pain medications as prescribed. Remember to take medications with food or you may start to feel nausea.

Do not drink alcohol or smoke during this time period.

Get plenty of rest. Walking is encouraged after surgery, but avoid strenuous activities until 6 weeks after surgery.

Follow a well balanced diet, which includes protein and is limited in salt intake. A high salt diet can lead to increased swelling.

If you do not have a bowel movement in two days after surgery, you may take over the counter laxatives like Colace and Senna to encourage your bowels to move.

If you experience any generalized itching, rash, wheezing or tightness in the throat, stop taking all medications and call the office immediately, as this may be a sign of a drug allergy.

Do not drive until you are no longer taking oral pain medications.

Schedule a follow up appointment to see Dr. Dec within a week of leaving the hospital.

Your breast drain will likely be removed at this time.

### **Incision and Drain Care**

You will have a clear skin glue over the incisions, it will stay in place for three weeks. You may shower immediately after surgery. Gently wash the incisions with soap and water, but do not submerge the incisions under water. Make sure someone is with you at your first shower.

Do not use a heating pad. Your sensitivity to heat may be diminished and a heating pad may burn the skin.

After 3 weeks when healing is complete you may begin silicone strip to help the scars mature faster.

Your belly button dressing will be removed before you leave the hospital.

Dr. Dec will place one or two drains in the area of surgery. These drains help collect the fluid which normally forms during healing. The drains will typically be removed in 1 to 3 weeks after surgery.

Care for the drains will be reviewed by your nurse before discharge from the hospital. Keep your drain bulbs collapsed to create a mild suction. Record the time and amounts of drainage over each 24 hour period. It is important to record each individual drain output.

A drain is typically removed when the output falls below 30 cc per 24 hour period.

### **The First 6 Weeks After Surgery**

You will see Dr. Dec in the office every week for the first 3 weeks.

Do not engage in any strenuous activities for 6 weeks after your procedure.

You may return to work when you feel able and are cleared to do so by Dr. Dec. Typically this is around 4 weeks after surgery, but may be longer depending on the nature of your work.

The reconstructed breast will have moderate swelling, which may make it larger than your other breast.

Your abdomen will also have moderate swelling. This will subside in 6 to 9 weeks.

Tightness of the abdomen is a normal feeling after this surgery. This will relax with time and may be improved with maintaining a flexed position.

### **The First 6 Months After Surgery**

All surgeries involve some scarring, which can take up to six months or a year to fade. Avoid exposing scars to sunlight, which can cause permanent discoloration. A good sunscreen will protect the scars and any surrounding tissues. You may use a silicone sheet, gel, or cream when the incisions are well healed. Over the counter products are fine.

### **When to Call the Office**

Feel free to call us at any time. We want you to be safe and comfortable during your recovery.

If you have increased swelling, pain, or color change of the reconstruction. In cases where both breasts are reconstructed if one side is significantly different from the other.

If you have sudden increased swelling of the abdomen.

If you have increased redness around the incisions.

If you have severe pain not relieved by pain medications.

If you have a fever over 101 F.

If you have side effects from the medications: rash, nausea, vomiting.

Dr. Dec's Office: **(212) 390-8400**.

After business hours and on weekends: **(212) 606-0000**