

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why does my binder have to be firmly wrapped around me all the time?

A: Your binder helps to reduce fluid build up at the surgical site. It also holds the wound firmly in place.

Q: Can I bathe?

A: We do not recommend bathing in the first two weeks post-surgery. Our BCN will review your wound and advise accordingly.

Q: Why are there bruises surrounding my wound? Is this normal?

A: Bruising post-surgery is normal as surgery causes tiny blood vessels (capillaries) to burst. Bruises generally last three to six days, but they may last as long as three weeks.

Q: When should I seek medical help?

A: You may have more serious post-surgery complications. These include wound infections and haematoma (collection of blood in the wound). If you notice that your wound is becoming more painful over several days, please call TTSH Breast Clinic or your BCN to arrange for an urgent review.

The Breast Clinic
TTSH Medical Centre, Basement 1

Contact:
6357 7000 (Central Hotline)



Scan the QR Code with your smart phone to access the information online or visit <http://bit.ly/TTSHHealth-Library>.

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Department of
GENERAL SURGERY

Breast Wound Care (Post Surgery)



What is a Wound?

It is any damage which causes your skin to break.

You might develop non-healing wounds if you had breast surgery, radiation therapy or have a weak immunity. Wound infections can then develop in such cases.

What are Some Common Breast Surgeries?

1. Mastectomy:

- A surgery to remove your breast (single or both). This helps to reduce your risk of developing breast cancer or to treat it.
- You will usually have one wound on your chest wall after surgery.

2. Breast Reconstruction:

- A surgery to help restore your breast shape. This can be done together with mastectomy.
- You can expect a longer hospitalisation after surgery.



Illustration of a mastectomy

What to Expect After a Surgery?

1. Steri strips (paper tapes) and a waterproof dressing will be applied to your wound.
2. Your doctor will provide a chest binder. This binder will be wrapped firmly around your chest immediately after surgery.
3. Keep your wound dressing clean and dry.
4. You will have an appointment with our Breast Care Nurse (BCN) arranged within seven to ten days upon discharge. Your wound dressing will be removed during your appointment.

Common Post Surgery Complications:

- Pain
- Bruising
- Wound swelling
- Drain leakage and blockage
- Seroma (build up of fluid)
- Altered sensation and numbness

Factors Affecting Wound Healing:

- Age
- Pre-existing medical conditions
- Immune status
- Nutritional status
- Lifestyles (e.g. inactive, smoking, etc.)
- Skin conditions
- Medications (e.g. steroids, blood thinning, etc.)
- Infections

Signs of Wound Infection:

- Fever
- Redness of skin around the wound and warm to touch
- Increased swelling, tenderness or pain around the wound
- Yellow or greenish colour pus
- Cloudy wound drainage or discharge

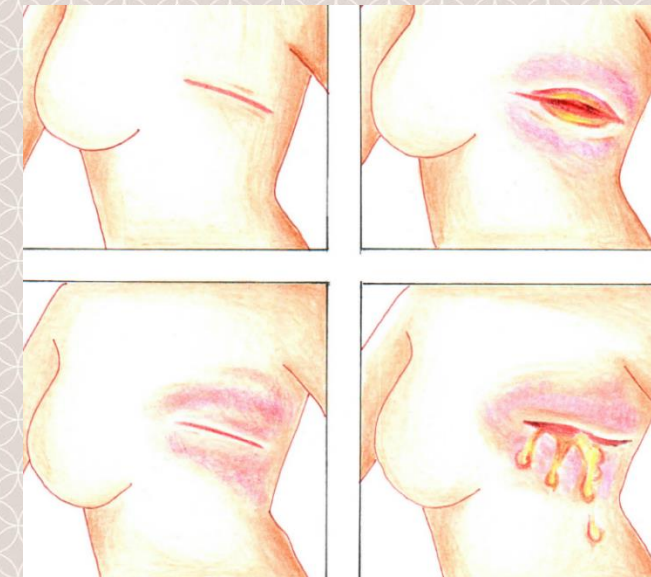


Illustration of an infected wound

Looking After Your Wound:

- Keep your wound dressing clean and dry.
- Do not use body lotions on your wound unless directed by your doctor.
- Do not use hot or cold packs as you may have reduced sensation around the surgical region area.
- Do not perform vigorous exercises unless instructed by your doctor.