

Your Breast Cancer Skills Checklist

Directions: Please use this checklist along with the Your Breast Cancer Surgery guide and video series. Complete the patient evaluation. Then share this with your nurse/surgeon. They will add in any comments or special instructions.

Patient/Care Provider Evaluation		Professional Evaluation	
1	I can do this on my own	1	Can do independently
2	I need a little help	2	Needs some help
3	I need much help	3	Needs much help and additional review
4	I had no chance to practice	4	No chance to review; home care to follow-up

1 SKILL— Common Exercises after Breast Surgery

		Patient/Provider	Professional	Comments/Instructions
1	Deep Breathing			
2	Shoulder Blade Squeeze			
3	Wand Exercise			
4	Winging It			
5	Side Bends			
6	Walking			

2 SKILL— Wash the incision site

		Patient/Provider	Professional	Comments/Instructions
1	Check your incision site for any sign of infection			
2	Leave the surgical glue or Steri-Strips® in place These will fall off on their own in 5-10 days			
3	Wash your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer			
4	Wet and soap a clean washcloth with warm water			
5	Pat the soap and water over the incision site. Follow with water only to rinse off the soap.			
6	Pat dry			

If you have a Surgical Drain:

3 SKILL— Clear the drainage tube

		Patient/Provider	Professional	Comments/Instructions
1	Wash your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer.			
2	Firmly hold the tubing near where it comes out of the skin. Keep this hand holding firmly.			
3	Grasp the tubing with your other hand			
4	Squeeze the tubing so it becomes flat			
5	Slide your fingers down the tubing toward the drain bulb			
6	Release the tubing			

4 SKILL—Empty the Drain Bulb

		Patient/Provider	Professional	Comments/Instructions
1	Hold the bulb so the opening points away from you			
2	Open the cap on the bulb			
3	Squeeze the drainage into a measuring cup			
4	Hold the bulb opening away from you			
5	Squeeze the bulb to make sure there is suction from the wound site.			
6	Cap the squeezed bulb			
7	Secure the drain to your clothing, using tape or a safety pin			
8	Use the Drain Measurement Log to write down the amount of drainage.			
9	Pour the drainage into a toilet and flush			
10	Wash your hands			

5 SKILL—Remove the old dressing around the drain

		Patient/Provider	Professional	Comments/Instructions
1	Wash your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer			
2	Remove the old dressing			
3	Check the dressing for unusual or bad smelling drainage and throw in trash			
4	Wash your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer.			
5	Check skin around the tubing for any redness, swelling, warmth, or bad-smelling drainage			

6 SKILL—Clean the skin

		Patient/Provider	Professional	Comments/Instructions
1	Clean skin around tubing with soap and water			
2	Pat dry			

7 SKILL—Apply the new dressing

		Patient/Provider	Professional	Comments/Instructions
1	Open the split gauze dressing			
2	Cut the gauze with clean scissors, if needed			
3	Apply antibiotic ointment around the skin opening if instructed to do so by your surgical team			
4	Place the split gauze opening around the drain			
5	Place a second gauze to protect the drain and cover the insertion site			
6	Tape around the gauze to secure it into place			
7	Wash your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer.			