

Breast Surgery Recovery:

What to Expect and When to Call Your Care Team

Some symptoms can be part of the normal healing process after breast surgery.

These may include:

- Pain, soreness or discomfort near the surgical area
- Swelling or bruising
- Tightness, firmness or pulling near the incision site
- Fatigue or lower energy than normal
- Limited arm movement
- Mild nausea after pain medications
- Drainage if you have surgical drains
- Firmness where the tissue was removed
- Scars or changes in how the skin looks or feels

Seek urgent medical attention if you have:

- Chest pain
- Trouble breathing or shortness of breath
- Fainting or severe dizziness
- Heavy bleeding
- Abnormally rapid heart rate
- Sudden, severe swelling or pain

Ask questions about your options.

Some tools may help support recovery by:

1. Supporting comfort and mobility at home
2. Helping manage fluid after surgery
3. Making drain care easier to track
4. Offering time and medication-management services
5. Helping you notice changes to report to your care team

Call your care team if you notice:

- Chills or feeling unwell quickly
- A fever
- Redness, warmth or swelling that is new, spreading or getting worse
- Pain getting worse or not controlled by your medication plan
- Fluid, pus or drainage from the incision
- Drainage that suddenly increases or smells bad
- Oozing, redness or swelling around a drain site
- The incision opens or pulls apart
- A breast, chest area or underarm suddenly becomes firm, swollen or more painful
- Any symptom that feels new, concerning or different from what your care team told you to expect

Sources:

<https://www.komen.org/breast-cancer/treatment/type/surgery/>

<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/treatment-types/surgery/recovering-from-cancer-surgery.html>

<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/supportive-care/tubes-and-drains.html>

<https://www.facs.org/for-patients/the-day-of-your-surgery/breast-cancer-surgery/after-your-operation/call-your-surgeon/>

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