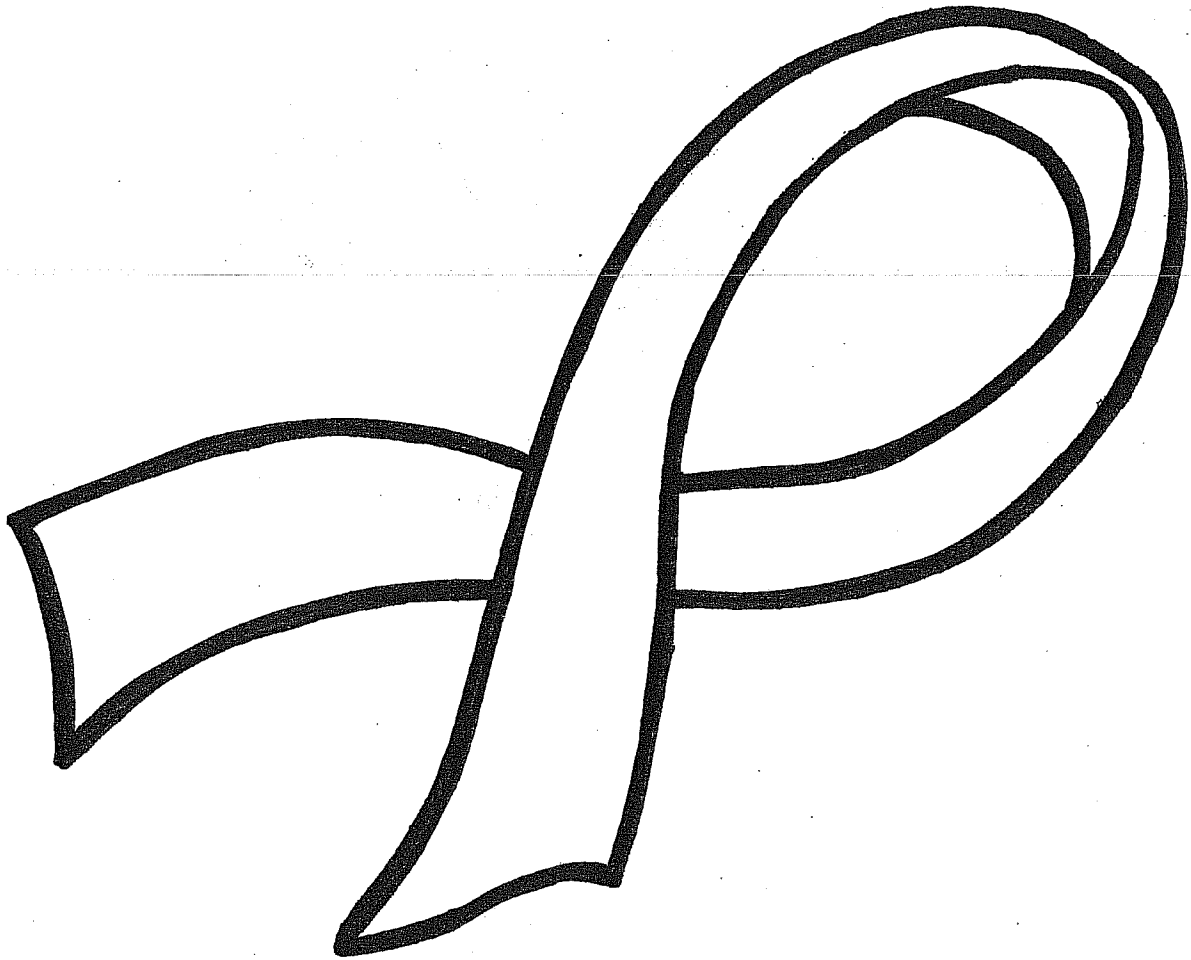


# **Mastectomy**

## **A Patient's Guide**



### **When You Go Home**

*Northwest Health System*

## **Activity**

After you return home, you may feel weak and tired. The medicine that you received during your surgery will continue to make you tired and sleepy for a few days. Most of your energy should be used for healing.

You **can** get up, walk, and take care of yourself.

You **should not**:

- raise your affected arm away from your body
- stretch, strain, or lift with the affected arm
- exercise your affected arm until you have been released to do so by your physician

The more activity you do with your affected arm, the more drainage you will produce which will prolong the removal of the drains.

## **Going Home with a Drain In Place**

Drains are placed under the skin during the surgery to remove blood and other fluids from this area. This allows for the wounds to heal and decreases the chance of infection.

Your doctor will remove the drain(s) once the drainage has been reduced to a specific level.

You can not have a shower as long as the drain is in place. You may sponge bathe but be careful not to get the drain tube or insertion area wet.



## **Safety/Precautions**

To avoid injury/swelling of the involved arm, please follow these guidelines:

### **DO NOT:**

- Carry a heavy purse, suitcase, or bag on the involved arm
- Wear tight or restrictive clothing on the involved arm
- Wear a tight watch or jewelry on the involved arm
- Take your blood pressure, a blood sample, or start an IV on the involved arm
- Get a sunburn

### **DO:**

- Wear gloves when working outdoors
- Wear rubber gloves when scouring pots and pans
- Avoid burns on the involved arm and hand.
- Use an electric razor for shaving
- Avoid cuts on the involved arm
- Cleanse a cut well and bandage to prevent infection
- Keep your arm elevated when possible

## Exercises

Do every morning or evening after  
shower or bath

Practice deep breathing, exhaling  
during the work portion of the  
exercise.

Move slowly in all exercises.

**DO NOT BOUNCE!**

Use a regular bath towel for the towel  
exercises

The towel will help you keep both  
sides of your arms together

This will allow you to exercise your  
involved arm with assistance from  
your uninvolved arm

## Warm-up exercises

- Stand in good alignment with your knees slightly bent
- Move your head sideways with your ear facing the shoulder and hold 10 seconds
- Now move your head toward the other side and hold 10 seconds
- Repeat 5 times



- Move head down tucking in your chin and hold 10 seconds
- Move back to starting position
- Repeat 5 times.



- Turn head to look over your shoulder and hold 10 seconds

- Turn to the opposite side and hold for 10 seconds

- Repeat 5 times



- Move shoulders up, back, down, and roll forward

- Repeat 5 times



- Move your arm across your chest, relax as you stretch it toward you gently with your other hand.
- Hold for 10 seconds
- Follow the same instructions on the other arm.
- Repeat 5 times



- Hold arms at shoulder height
- Roll your arms down until your thumbs are facing the floor and hold 5 seconds
- Now roll your arms up until your palms are facing the ceiling and hold for 5-10 seconds.
- Repeat 5 times



- Bring elbows up as far as comfortable
- Keep your elbows bent and turn your hands up toward the ceiling like you are “flapping” your arms.
- Hold for 5-10 seconds.
- Repeat 5 times.



- Hold arms at shoulder height or to a point of comfort
- Move fingers down toward the floor and relax, hold 5-10 seconds.
- Move fingers up toward the ceiling and hold 5-10 seconds
- Repeat 5 times



## Towel Exercises

- Hold towel in front of you with hands shoulder width apart.



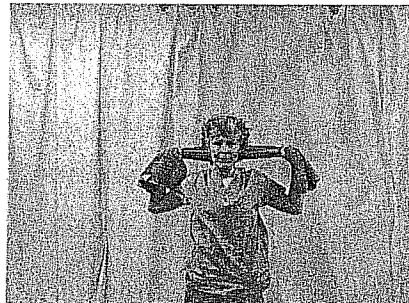
- Lift both arms up as far as comfortable holding the towel with both hands.
- Hold for 20 seconds
- Return to starting position and repeat 5 times.



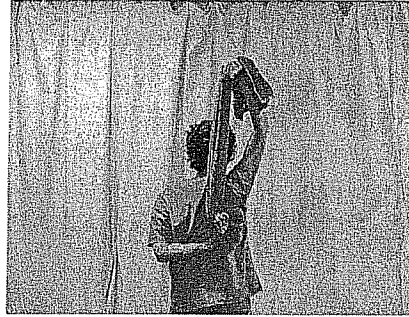
- Hold towel with both hands in front of you and lift over your head as far as it is comfortable.
- Slowly tilt your arms to the side keeping your upper arms close to your ears if possible. Hold for 20 seconds
- Move slowly to the opposite side and hold for 20 seconds
- Repeat 5 times.



- Hold towel with both hands in front of you and lift over your head as far as it is comfortable.
- Move down slowly behind your head and hold for 20 seconds.
- Repeat 5 times.



- Hold towel behind your back from above with one hand.
- Reach behind your back with the other hand and grab the towel as close to the other hand as possible.
- Pull up with the top arm and hold 20 seconds.
- Pull down with the bottom arm and hold 20 seconds
- Repeat 5 times.



- Hold towel behind your back with both hands.
- Lift up as far as comfortable and hold for 20 seconds
- Repeat 5 times

