

General Instructions – Expander / Implant Reconstruction

- An emotional letdown may occur following surgery. This is a normal response. Our nurses and physicians are ready to help you get through this phase.
- It is ok for you to shower on postoperative day number 3.
- One or 2 drainage tubes will be necessary and have to remain in place for 7 – 21 days following your operation. These drains are positioned around the implant. The purpose of the drains is to collect the excess fluid that is normally produced and to prevent the formation of a seroma or fluid collection.
- A fluid accumulation may be noticed around the implant following removal of the drain. Should this occur, call our office for instructions.
- Breast reconstruction using a tissue expander is frequently performed using a material known as acellular dermal matrix. The type is use most frequently is called AlloDerm (LifeCell Corp. Branchburg, NJ). This serves to compartmentalize the tissue expander and improve aesthetic outcomes.
- We will begin instilling saline into the tissue expander after 2 weeks. This will continue every 1 to 2 weeks for 2 to 4 months or until the desired breast size is obtained.
- If chemotherapy or radiation therapy is necessary, we do not usually instill saline until these treatments are complete.
- The tissue expander is generally removed and a permanent implant inserted at 3 to 4 months.
- Nipple reconstruction is completed 2 to 3 months following insertion of the permanent implant and the nipple tattoo (areola) is applied 2 to 3 months following nipple reconstruction.