

General Instructions – Free TRAM or DIEP Flap

- Weight control may be more difficult immediately following surgery. Do not get frustrated, it will pass.
- 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.
- Swelling and slight edema of your new breast and abdomen is to be expected. You may find that your clothes do not fit as they did but be patient, for this will usually pass in 3 to 6 months.
- Avoid strenuous exercise for 6 weeks. This includes running, lifting heavy objects, or any bouncing activity.
- Do not apply anything hot such as a heating pad on the reconstructed breast. This can cause a burn.
- It is ok to be up and walking the first day after surgery. The nurses and physical therapists will assist you with this. You will most likely have to walk flexed at the hip because of the abdominal closure. This will subside over the next 3 – 5 days and you should then be able to stand up straight.
- It is usually possible to resume driving a car at about 10 – 14 days following your operation. Driving is commenced when you are no longer taking narcotic pain medications and you have full range of motion.
- Showering is permitted on postoperative day three. The incisions and drain sites can get wet.
- Avoid smoking cigarettes for 1 month following surgery.
- Tightness around the abdominal area may be experienced following removal of the tissue from the abdomen. This may take 1 to 3 months to resolve.
- Drainage tubes will be present and will remain for approximately 3 to 10 days following the surgery.
- A fluid accumulation may be noticed in the abdominal or breast region. You should call the office for instructions should this occur.
- Follow-up will generally be at 1 week, 6 weeks, 3 months, 6 months, and 1 year following the operation.
- Nipple reconstruction, contralateral breast surgery, and any necessary revisions to the reconstructed breast are generally performed at 3 months. The nipple tattoo (areola) is applied at 6 months.
- Postoperative chemotherapy or radiation therapy may result in deferring these secondary operations until complete.

