



TAROLA PLASTIC SURGERY
NICHOLAS A. TAROLA, MD

Tissue Expander Breast Reconstruction

Your Ace bandage will be removed the day after surgery.

You may shower after the wrap is removed. Leave tapes in place. Pat dry after your shower.

Wear a soft cup or sports bra for 4 weeks after your surgery. You may re-wrap yourself in an Ace wrap if it is more comfortable until seen at your first post-operative visit.

No underwire bra until cleared by Dr. Tarola or his staff. Do not apply any heat or cold to the surgical site.

No heavy lifting (no more than 10 lbs.) for 4-6 weeks after surgery. You may resume normal activities in 2 weeks.

Begin arm exercises as soon as possible. Five times per day, raise your hand above head so shoulder is abducted at least 90° with the goal being 180° directly above the head by 2 weeks. Walk hand up wall to help achieve goal. You may brush your teeth and hair.

Tightness in the chest region: Tingling, burning, or intermittent shooting pain are normal experiences as the skin, tissue, and sensory nerves heal. Pain medication and muscle relaxants will help you cope with any discomfort. If you have drains, you may experience additional localized discomfort.

Consistent sharp pain should be reported to our office immediately.

Shiny skin or any itchy feeling: Swelling can cause the skin to appear shiny. As the healing process advances, you may also find a mild to severe itchy feeling of the skin. An antihistamine like Benadryl can help to alleviate severe, constant itchiness. **If the skin becomes red and hot to the touch, contact our office immediately.**

Asymmetry, the breasts look different, or heal differently. Breasts may look or feel quite different from one another in the days following surgery, this is normal. No two breasts are perfectly symmetrical in nature or following breast reconstruction surgery.

CALL THE OFFICE IMMEDIATELY IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- **A high fever (over 101°), severe nausea and vomiting, continued dizziness or incoherent behavior, such as hallucinations**
- **Any pain that cannot be controlled by your pain medication**
- **Bright red skin that is hot to the touch**
- **Excessive bleeding or fluid seeping through the incisions**
- **A severely misshapen breast or bruising that is localized to one breast or region of the chest**



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What To Expect After Tissue Expansion

- You may experience minor discomfort for the following 12-24 hours after each tissue expansion. This discomfort usually subsides 2-3 days after each tissue expansion.
- The tissue expander may shift after the first or second expansion.
- You may experience more discomfort on one side than the other if you have bilateral tissue expanders in place.
- Your posture may change causing you to have some upper and/or mid back pain as you are expanded.
- Your shoulder range of motion may become stiff requiring continued shoulder exercises during the expansion process to prevent shoulder stiffness and a frozen shoulder.
- You may find it difficult to sleep because you feel tight across the chest and shoulders.
- You may find it difficult to fit into certain types of tight fitting clothing. You may need to wear oversized shirts until the final exchange of the tissue expander.
- You may feel chest tightness or heaviness secondary to being expanded. This usually subsides time.
- The tissue expanders will remain in place for a minimum of 8 weeks after completing the last tissue expansion. This will allow for the soft tissues to heal and recover from being stretched before the second surgery takes place for the exchange of the tissue expander for a permanent breast implant.

Desired Breast Size

- This is determined on an individual basis.
- There is no scientific way to determine the exact breast size. It will be determined by a number of different factors...
 - How well you tolerate each tissue expansion.
 - How well deerskin reacts to the expansions.
 - The size of the other breast (if a unilateral tissue expander).
 - Previous surgeries are amount of scarring or previous radiation treatment.
- We recommend trying on a desire bra size as you approach your desired breast size to see how well the bra size fits.

Appearance

- While the tissue is being expanded, a bolt will be created. Depending upon the location of the tissue expander, the bulge may be considered desirable or unsightly.
- Following the exchange of the tissue expander, a more normal and desirable look should be restored.
- After the exchange for permanent implant, the breasts will feel softer with less fullness in her axilla.