



TAROLA PLASTIC SURGERY

NICHOLAS A. TAROLA, MD

Tissue Expander Breast Reconstruction

You may shower daily starting two days after surgery. Do not take a bath until instructed. No hot tubs, swimming and legs while the tissue expander is in place. Wash incisions with soap and water daily. Leave tapes in place and pat dry. Do not wrap chest or use any compression garments after surgery. Secure drains. You can use moisturizer on the incisions and surrounding skin starting 3 weeks.

See drain instruction sheet for drain care.

Resume normal activity 3-5 days after surgery (ie. Washing hair, showering, etc). Avoid vigorous activity and heavy lifting for 6 weeks. Walk daily. Do not push yourself up with the arm(s) on the reconstructed side. You need someone to drive you to your appointment for the first 3 weeks postoperatively for as long as he require narcotic pain medication.

Begin arm exercises as soon as possible. Walk fingers up the wall, brushing teeth/hair, and gentle range of motion. This will help prevent shoulder stiffness or frozen shoulder.

Tightness in the chest or back region and stiffness; Tingling, burning or intermittent shooting pain: These are normal experiences as the skin, muscles and tissue stretch to accommodate your implants, and as 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 breasts' skin to appear shiny. As the healing process advances, you may also find a mild to severe itchy feeling of the breasts. 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.

A sloshing sound or sensation: This is not the result of your implant filler, but rather of air that is trapped in the implant pocket and fluid that may naturally accumulate. This is perfectly normal and will resolve within 2-4 weeks.

Be aware: You cannot have an MRI if you have tissue expanders in place. The tissue expanders may be detected via the security scanners at the airport. You will need a note from your doctor if you plan to travel indicating you have tissue expanders in place with metal.

OUR OFFICE SHOULD BE CONTACTED IMMEDIATELY IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- A high fever, (over 101o) 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.