



After Surgery Concerns

Online version with active resource links at: <http://cancer-help.me/AfterSurgery>

General guidelines for after breast cancer surgery.

Side effects vary from person to person based on several factors:

- The location of the cancer
- The type of surgery
- Other treatments received before surgery, such as chemotherapy
- The person's general health

It is very important to keep your incision clean and dry. This will help to minimize the risk of an infection and promote the healing process.

If there are concerns or questions about side effects after surgery, contact your health care team.

Always follow your surgeon's specific instructions for care after your surgery.

Common side effects of cancer surgery

Pain. It is common to have pain or discomfort after surgery. Pain after surgery lessens gradually as the body heals. Your doctor may give you pain medications to decrease your discomfort. Take medications as prescribed.

Fatigue. Many people feel tired after major surgery, especially when it involves the abdomen or chest. Fatigue usually goes away gradually; activity should be as tolerated.

Swelling around the site of surgery. The body's natural response after surgery is inflammation and swelling. As the healing occurs, the swelling reduces. If you are concerned about the swelling, contact your healthcare provider. Sending a picture may be useful as well.

Appetite loss. General anesthesia may reduce your appetite. Most people regain their appetite shortly after surgery. Choose a healthy diet and eat foods as tolerated.

Drainage from the site of surgery. Sometimes the fluid that builds up at the surgery site drain through the surgical wound. Signs of infection may include fever, redness around the wound or odorous drainage from the wound. If you develop signs of an infection, contact your surgeon's office.

Bruising around the site of surgery. After any surgical procedure, some blood may leak from small blood vessels under the skin. This can cause bruising, which is a common occurrence after surgery.

Numbness. It is common to experience some numbness at the incision site. This is because the nerves in the skin are disrupted during surgery. Numbness usually does not cause a person any long-lasting effects. If you are concerned, contact your surgeon.

Content adapted from websites below.

Resources for Additional Information:

- [Cancer.Net, Side Effects of Surgery](#)
- [American Cancer Society, Recovering from Cancer](#)
- [NIH, NCI Surgery to Treat Cancer](#)

Información Española

- [Cancer.Net, Efectos secundarios de la cirugía](#)
- [NIH, Cirugía para tratar el cancer](#)