

Benrus Surgical

Breast Care

Precautions Following Removal of Lymph Nodes

These precautions are presented to you to help prevent any complications that might result from having some of the lymph nodes removed from under your arm. We suggest you follow these precautions for the rest of your life. Lymphedema can occur immediately post-operative, within a few months, or a couple of years or longer after cancer therapy. With proper education and care, lymphedema can be avoided.

Maintain normal body weight and avoid weight gain.

Have blood tests and injections done on the other arm.

Avoid binding or constricting the arm. Have blood pressure taken on the other arm.

Use gloves when gardening, oven mitt when cooking, and rubber gloves when using chemical cleaners.

Use insect repellent when exposed to biting or stinging insects.

Wash all cuts or breaks in the skin well, apply an antibacterial agent (such as Neosporin), until it has healed.

Use sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 on the arm.

Keep the skin well-conditioned by using moisturizing lotion.

Use your arm as normally as possible. Avoid vigorous repetitive movements against resistance with the affected arm.

When to call the doctor:

Localized redness.

New or sudden swelling in the arm, hand, fingers, or chest wall.

Localized increase in temperature of the skin.

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