

Phalloplasty: Care After Surgery

Follow your discharge instructions to help you recover. Most people get better each day after surgery, but it may take a while to fully recover. You will slowly feel stronger and become more active.

If you have any questions,
please talk with your
physician.

Activity and general precautions

- › Sit on an inflatable donut cushion to relieve pressure on the genital area.
- › To sit down, take a wide stance and gently lower yourself to the seat to avoid sitting on your penis.
- › Try to walk as much as you are able.
- › Do not run or jog for 6 to 8 weeks.
- › Do not have sexual activity for 6 to 8 weeks.
- › Do not do activities that may put pressure on your genital area such as riding a cycle and horseback riding.

Save your energy

After surgery, it is common to feel like you do not have enough energy to complete your daily activities. Try to save your energy by doing these things:

- › Plan out your day and do the most important tasks first.
- › Switch between harder tasks and lighter tasks.
- › Take rest breaks often.
- › Do tasks sitting down as much as possible.
- › Ask for help if you need it.

For comfort

Take medication for pain as directed by your physician. Do not drive while taking prescription pain medication.

Do not use cool packs or heating pads on your genital area until your surgeon tells you that you may do so.

Getting dressed

- › Wear loose-fitting underwear such as boxer briefs or mesh underwear.
- › Put your ankle on the opposite knee to put on and take off lower body clothing.
- › Use a reacher, shoe horn or sock aid to make getting dressed easier.

Going to the bathroom

It is common to feel like you need to urinate more often. Follow these guidelines when using the toilet.

- › Wash your hands before and after toileting.
- › Wipe from the front to the back.

Showering

Keep the wound area clean by showering every day. Follow these guidelines:

- › Take off the wound bandages before you shower except for the yellow gauze attached to your thigh(s).
- › Keep the skin graft wound on your arm dry.
- › Use unscented, mild soap.
- › Let the soap and warm water gently run over the wound.
- › Pat dry with a clean towel.
- › Do not take a tub bath, swim or use a hot tub for 4 to 6 weeks.
- › You can use a long-handled sponge and/or a shower chair to make showering easier.

Caring for your penis

- › Check that your penis stays warm and soft.
- › Support your penis at a 90-degree angle at all times for 6 to 8 weeks. Do not dangle your penis. The nurse will show you how to support your penis with gauze padding.
- › Do not bend your penis upward or to either side.

Wrist and hand exercises

Follow these exercises for your wrist and hand of your arm that has the skin graft. Do the exercises 3 times a day at least 5 days a week.

Exercises:

1. Open and close your fingers into a fist 10 times.
2. Touch each fingertip to your thumb 10 times.
3. Bend your wrist downwards and then upwards 10 times.
4. Move your wrist in a circle clockwise and then counter clockwise 10 times.

When to call your physician

Contact your physician if you have any of these symptoms:

- › Your penis is **not** warm and soft
- › New swelling, redness or foul odors at the wound sites
- › A sudden increase in pain
- › A temperature of 100.4 degrees F or more

Community resources

For support, visit these sites:

Center on Halsted

This is a LGBTQ community center in Chicago that offers programming, events, behavioral health services and support groups.

To learn more, go to **centeronhalsted.org**



Chicago Gender Society

This group holds monthly meetings, social events and support groups for people to safely explore their gender identity.

To learn more, go to **chicagogender.org**

Howard Brown Health

This organization provides programming, support groups, and medical and behavioral health services to address barriers faced by transgender and gender non-conforming people.

To learn more, go to **howardbrown.org**

Project VIDA

This organization takes a holistic approach to reduce health disparities among underserved communities through support groups, wellness programs, case management and health prevention (testing and education).

To learn more, go to **projectvida.org**

For more information about Northwestern Medicine, please visit our website at **nm.org**.