

## NEWTON-WELLESLEY SURGEONS, INC.

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### POSTOPERATIVE SENTINEL LYMPH NODE BIOPSY INFORMATION

**Surgery** You have just undergone surgery to remove one or more lymph nodes in order to better stage your disease. This involves making an incision in your armpit or groin in order to remove the appropriate lymph nodes.

**Pain** Upon discharge from the hospital, you will be given a prescription for pain medication. Because pain medication can be constipating, be sure to drink lots of fluids and eat plenty of fruits and vegetables. It will also be helpful to take a stool softener such as Colace or Metamucil, once or twice a day. If you are unable to have a bowel movement following surgery, a mild laxative such as Milk of Magnesia may be used. Being up and about after surgery is also helpful in regulating bowel function.

**Incision** Your incision is closed using a number of sutures below the skin surface. When you remove the outer dressing (see bathing instructions below for when to remove the dressing), you will find a special ribbed tape covering the incision. If your procedure was accompanied with a breast biopsy or wide excision of a melanoma, you will be provided with additional wound care instructions. You may find that your incision is swollen following surgery and could have some discoloration. This swelling and discoloration is normal and will resolve over the next several weeks to months. Many patients experience areas of numbness around the incision as a result of handling the sensory nerve to the armpit or groin during surgery. This too will resolve with time.

**Bathing** You are asked to keep the outer dressing over the incision dry and in place for 1 day following surgery. On the day after surgery, remove the outer dressing. It is now safe for you to get into the shower. Be careful not to scrub at the incision line, simply let the water run over the incision and gently pat the area dry.

**Activity** Following surgery, you are encouraged to do as much walking as is comfortable. You are not to operate a vehicle while you are having discomfort or taking pain medication. This will interfere with your driving safely. Your surgeon will tell you when it is safe to resume driving.

**Precautions** Although not commonly seen, any incision is susceptible to infection. If you develop a fever, of 101 degrees or above, have unexpected pain, redness or drainage from the incision, please contact my office.

**Follow-up** Please call the office a day or two after you go home to schedule your Postoperative appointment for approximately one week after surgery.

**If you have any questions about your recovery, please do not hesitate to call our office.**