



Abdominoplasty Post-Operative Care Guide

MORNING OF SURGERY

- Do not eat or drink anything at all for at least 6 hours prior to surgery.
- Do not wear contact lenses, wigs, hairpins, hairpieces or jewelry. Dress in old, loose, comfortable clothes. Wear slip-on shoes.
- Have someone drive you to your surgery and make certain someone will be available to take you home and stay with you for 24 hours.
- Do not smoke.

WHAT ARE MY POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS?

- Get plenty of rest and follow a balanced diet.
- Constipation is a side effect of decreased activity, use of pain medicines, and dehydration. Be sure to walk, drink fluids regularly, and consider adding raw fruit to your diet. Stool softeners can also be added initially for at least a week.
- Do not take Dispirin or any other NSAIDs unless approved by your surgeon.
- If you are taking vitamins with iron, resume these as tolerated.
- Do not smoke or be around a smoker. This can be the most significant cause of serious healing issues.

WHAT SHOULD MY ACTIVITY LEVEL BE?

- Start walking as soon as possible - this helps to reduce swelling, lower the chance of developing blood clots and/or pneumonia, and avoid constipation.
- Do not drive until you have full range of motion with your arms, and can stop the car or swerve in an emergency, typically 4 weeks after surgery.
- Avoid lifting anything over 5 kg for 6 weeks.
- Resume sexual activity as comfort permits, usually 2-3 weeks postoperatively.
- Avoid straining of abdominal muscles. Strenuous exercise and activities are restricted for 8 weeks.
- Return to work in 6-8 weeks.

HOW DO I TAKE CARE OF MY INCISION?

- You may shower 48 hours after removal of the drainage tubes.
- Keep incisions clean and inspect daily for signs of infection.
- No tub soaking while drains are in place and for 6-8 weeks following surgery.
- Wear your compression garment 24/7 for at least 6 weeks post-op.
- Place soft dressing over incisions and around drain sites daily to wick away moisture and to prevent irritation by garment along the incision line.
- Sleep with head slightly elevated and pillows under your knees to decrease tension on your incision.

HOW SHOULD I EXPECT TO FEEL?

- You may experience temporary soreness, bruising, swelling and tightness in the belly as well as discomfort in the incision area.
- Most of the higher discomfort will subside after the first few days.
- You will have bruising and swelling of the abdomen. The majority of bruising and swelling will subside in 6-8 weeks.
- You may feel tired for several weeks or months.

WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE?

- Your abdomen will feel firmer with a narrower waistline.
- You will walk slightly bent forward and gradually return to normal posture over next 3 weeks.
- Scars will be reddened for 6 months. After that, they will fade and soften.
- The scar will extend from one hipbone to the other, low on the abdomen.

WHEN SHOULD I CALL MY DOCTOR?

- If you have increased swelling or bruising.
- If you have increased redness along the incision.
- If you have severe or increased pain not relieved by medication.
- If you have any side effects to medications; such as, rash, nausea, headache, vomiting or constipation.
- If you have an oral temperature over 101°F.
- If you have any yellowish or greenish drainage from the incisions or notice a foul odor.
- If you have bleeding from the incisions that is difficult to control with light pressure.
- If you have loss of feeling or motion.