

Abdominoplasty (Tummy Tuck) Post-Operative Care

Instructions

- Have someone drive you home after surgery and help you at home for 1-2 days.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Follow balanced diet.
- Decreased activity may promote constipation, so you may want to add more raw fruit to your diet, and be sure to increase fluid intake.
- Take pain medication as prescribed. Do not take aspirin or any products containing aspirin until approved by your physician.
- Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medications.
- If you are taking vitamins with iron, resume these as tolerated.
- Do not smoke, as smoking delays healing and increases the risk of complications.

Activities

- Start walking as soon as possible, as this helps to reduce swelling and lowers the chance of blood clots.
- Do not drive until you are no longer taking any pain medications (narcotics).
- Do not drive until you have full range of motion with your arms.
- No lifting greater than 5 lbs. for 6 weeks. This can be modified by your physician.
- Resume sexual activity as comfort permits, usually 2-3 weeks postoperatively.
- Avoid straining of abdominal muscles. Strenuous exercise and activities are restricted for 6 weeks.
- Return to work in 2-4 weeks.

Incision Care

- You may shower 48 hours after removal of all drainage tubes.
- Avoid exposing scars to sun for at least 12 months.
- Always use a strong sunblock, if sun exposure is unavoidable (SPF 30 or greater).
- Keep steri-strips on.
- Keep incisions clean and inspect daily for signs of infection.
- No tub soaking while sutures or drains are in place.
- Wear your compression garment 24/7 for 6 weeks post op.
- Place daily soft dressing over incisions and around drain sites 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.

What to Expect

- You may experience temporary pain, soreness, numbness of abdominal skin, incision discomfort.
- Maximum discomfort will occur 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.

Appearance

- Flatter, firmer abdomen with 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 near one hipbone to the other, low on the abdomen.

Follow-Up Care

- Abdominal drains removed when less than 30 ml for 24-48 hours. (This will vary depending on your physician).
- Surface stitches removed in 7-10 days.

When To Call

- If you have increased swelling or bruising.
- If swelling and redness persist after a few days.
- 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.
- If you have an oral temperature over 100.4 degrees.
- 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.