

ABDOMINOPLASTY/TUMMY TUCK

Postoperative Instructions Following Surgery of the Abdomen

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1. Right After Surgery: You will spend the first night after the abdominoplasty operation at the surgery center. Following this first night, you will be released home early in the morning. You will need someone to drive you home and someone to help you for the first few days. If you have small children, arrange for help with the children for the first two weeks after surgery.

2. Dressings: Leave all dressings in place right after surgery. An abdominal binder or a compression girdle will hold the dressings in place until you are seen in our office. We will do the first dressing change in the office. You will need minimal dressing changes after the first change. We will give your instructions if any further dressing change is needed.

3. Belly button: Once the original dressing has been removed from your belly button, you should apply antibiotic ointment daily until 10-14 days after surgery when the incision around the belly button has healed.

4. Drains: Most patients undergoing abdominoplasty in our practice will not have drains after surgery. If, however, the use of drains is necessary after surgery, they usually will be removed about 7-10 days after the operation.

5. Showering: You may shower only after the abdominal drains have been removed. However, you may sponge bathe while the drains are in place. If your surgery was performed without drains, you may shower three days after surgery. You will require some assistance to remove the binder and get into the shower. During the first few days, you may become lightheaded when rising from a lying down position. Please do so slowly. You may also become lightheaded when you remove your garment. Have someone help you the first time. In the case of a compression garment, you may shower with it on during the first week, as it can be difficult to put the garment back on due to swelling. The garment will dry after 20-30 minutes following the shower. By one week after surgery, you will be able to remove the garment to shower.

6. Swelling and bruising: Swelling and bruising tends to vary from person to person. Areas of liposuction tend to bruise more than other areas. Your swelling will be at its maximal level at around one week after surgery. You will begin to notice gradual decrease in swelling after this time. Bruising will often work its way into areas where you did not have surgery (such as legs and back) due to gravity. Many herbal supplements tend to have a worsening effect on bruising when taken before surgery. Please discuss any medications which you plan to take before surgery with Dr. Behmand or Dr. Ting during the preoperative visit.

7. Eating: Start with light and soft meals. As you get more comfortable, you may progress to regular food. Drinking fluids is very important after surgery; at least 6-8 large glasses of water per day. Try to drink non-caffeinated fluids.

8. Medications: All your medications will be prescribed for you during your preoperative visit at our office. Please fill these prescriptions prior to your surgery. Take your medications as prescribed. Try not to take pain medication on an empty stomach; it can cause nausea. You only need to take the pain medication, if you have discomfort. Taper off the pain medication when your pain level starts to decrease during the first week. The stool softener helps prevent and relieve constipation, but it is effective only if you are drinking plenty of fluids with it.

9. Driving: Do not drive yet. Once you are NO LONGER TAKING pain medication at all, and are feeling comfortable, you may start driving.

10. Activity: Allow yourself to rest following your surgery. It is OK for you to get up and use the restroom & walk around your house. But it is NOT OK for you to attempt exercise at ANY level until instructed to do so by Dr. Behmand or Dr. Ting. When resting, move your legs and pump your feet hourly while awake to keep circulation of blood in your lower extremity. You may not do any type of household chores.

11. Exercise: Avoid exercise and aerobic activity for 6 weeks after abdominoplasty. You may resume all exercises gradually after 6 weeks.

12. Follow-up: During your preoperative appointment, you will be given a print out detailing the dates and times for your surgery and your first postoperative follow-up appointment. This sheet will be in the black folder given to you at our office.