

# ABDOMINOPLASTY/TUMMY TUCK/BODY LIFT

## Postoperative Instructions Following Surgery of the Abdomen

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### Call the office immediately if you have:

- A fever/temperature of 101 or higher
- Any unusual or painful swelling and redness
- Pain that is not relieved by your pain medication
- Any active bleeding soaking more than a 4x4 gauze
- Any purulent “pus like” drainage coming from the incision site

**1. Right After Surgery:** You will be released home shortly after surgery. 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. Deep Breathing Exercises:** Use the incentive spirometer hourly, while awake, during the first week after surgery.

-Inhale slowly through the mouth piece until the plastic ball reaches 1,500 cc

-Exhale and relax

-Repeat for a total of 10 times per hour

**3. Foot Pump and Ankle Circle Exercises:** Perform the following foot exercises every hour beginning when you return home and continue for the first week after surgery to keep circulation of blood in your lower extremities:

-While resting, pump your ankles up and down like stepping on a gas pedal

-Relax both feet, then repeat ten times before resting

-Circle both ankles to the left. Then, circle both ankles to the right

-Relax both feet, then repeat ten times before resting



**4. 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 at your first post-operative appointment. You will need minimal dressing changes after the first change. We will give you instructions if any further dressing changes are needed.

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

**6. 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 7-10 days after the operation. You may sponge bathe while drains are in place until after they are removed.

**7. Showering:** You may shower 3 days after surgery. You will require some assistance to remove the binder and get in to the shower. During the first few days after surgery, you may become lightheaded when rising from a lying or sitting position. Please do so slowly. You may also become lightheaded when you remove your garment, so have someone help you the first time. In the case of a compression garment, you may shower with it on during the first week after surgery, as it can be difficult to put the garment back on due to swelling. The garment will dry after 20-30 minutes following showering. By one week after surgery, you will be able to remove the garment to shower.

**8. 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 peak at around 1 week after surgery. You will begin to notice a gradual decrease in swelling (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 during your pre-operative visit.

**9. Driving:** Do not drive until one week after surgery and once you have discontinued taking your prescribed pain medication. If you are not comfortable driving at one week, please wait until you feel comfortable.

**10. Activity Level:** Allow yourself to rest following surgery. It is fine for you to get up and use the restroom or to walk around inside your house. But, it is not fine for you to attempt exercising at any level until instructed to do so by Dr. Behmand. You may not do any type of household chores.

**11. 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 one quart (about a liter). Try to drink non-caffeinated fluids.

**12. Medications:** All of your medications will be prescribed for you during your pre-operative visit at our office. Please fill these prescriptions prior to your surgery. Take your medications as prescribed. Do not take your medications 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 begins to decrease during the first week after surgery.

**13. Exercise:** Avoid exercising and aerobic activity for 6 weeks after abdominoplasty. You may resume all exercises gradually, once cleared by Dr. Behmand and only after 6 weeks.

**14. 24 Hour Answering Service:** If anything is urgently needed after 5 pm or over the weekend, please be aware that we do have a 24 hour answering service. You may call our regular office line at (925)939-9200 to reach the answering service for assistance.