

ABDOMINOPLASTY/TUMMY TUCK INSTRUCTIONS.

BEFORE SURGERY

PRELIMINARY

1. Smokers should stop 2 weeks before surgery and for 2 weeks after surgery. This will not only help reduce coughing and possible bleeding, it greatly improves wound healing and increases the chance of graft survival.
2. Report any signs of a cold, infection, boils or pustules appearing 2 weeks before surgery.
3. You must have a responsible adult pick you up after surgery. Arrange to have someone stay with you for the first 24 hours.

DAY OF SURGERY

1. Do not take medication of any kind unless instructed.
2. Nothing to eat or drink six (6) hours before surgery, this includes the antibiotic pill. If your surgery is in the afternoon, you may have toast or juice if taken at least 6 hours before surgery.
3. Wear comfortable, loose fitting clothes like a front button up top or dress that does not have to be pulled over the head.
4. Leave all valuables at home – this includes money, jewelry, handbags, and watches.
5. You must have someone drive for you after surgery. On arrival to the office give the office staff your driver's name and phone number, as well as the address and phone number where you will be the night of surgery.
6. You may have someone spend the first 24 hours with you. Additional instructions and prescriptions can be given to the person with you. Such prescriptions should be filled promptly.
7. Shower with an anti-bacterial soap before surgery. Also, please shave your legs and total groin area (everything).
8. If you have any questions before surgery please call the office.

 {INITIALS} Initials

AFTER YOUR SURGERY

1. Take medications according to the instructions on the bottle. If pain medications make you feel drowsy, have someone else give you your medicines according to the proper time intervals. Under such circumstances, you could forget and take them too often. Pain medications should be taken 20 minutes after a full meal, solid food, not just soup. Taking pain medications on an empty stomach can cause nausea and may lead to vomiting.
2. Do not self-medicate with your own painkillers, sleeping pills, muscle relaxants, or narcotics. Only take those medications prescribed by your treating physician after surgery. Self-medicating could lead to drug toxicity or death.
3. Remain in bed until you are able with bathroom privileges. Ambulation can be done as tolerated then. You may need assistance initially, particularly to guard against dizziness and possible fainting.
4. Avoid smoking for 2 weeks after surgery to promote wound healing as well as prevent coughing and possible bleeding.
5. **No alcohol for 5 days after surgery.**
6. You can expect:
 - a) Moderate discomfort- use pain medications as directed.
 - b) Moderate swelling – worst days are usually the 2nd and 3rd day.
 - c) Variable black and blue discoloration.

ALL OF THESE PROBLEMS ARE USUALLY THE WORST THE DAY AFTER SURGERY.
7. Call (760)837-0364 if you have:
 - a) Any pain in your calves or shortness of breath.
 - b) Severe pain not responding to pain medication.
 - c) Marked swelling on one side more than the other.
 - d) If any other questions or problems arise.
8. Avoid prolonged exposure to the sun and heat as well as vigorous physical activities for 3 weeks.
9. The compression garment is to be worn 24-48 hours until removed by the doctor at your next day post op visit. DO NOT take it off to bathe. You may continue to wear it afterwards as it may provide added comfort and further reduce swelling.
10. You may shower or bathe once the compression garment has been removed by the doctor. Until then, sponge bathe as necessary. After showering, apply dry-clean gauze around the wound where the drains are, this will keep the area nice and clean and free from bacteria formation.

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11. When sleeping, make sure you use a few pillows under your head and upper back as well as under your knees to help your body flex at the hips.

OFFICE VISITS

FIRST: Usually seen 1-2 days after surgery to check drains, wounds, and calves.

SECOND: 3-5 days for drain removal.

THIRD: 1 week to 10 days, 2nd drain will be removed.

Physician will determine additional visits.

ACTIVITY LEVEL

Start out eating something light after surgery (i.e., soup and toast, etc.). Showering but not bathing is permitted after 4 days, even with drains in place. Activity is generally limited to bed rest for the first 48 hours, however you may get up to use the bathroom or walk to the kitchen. Light ambulation with assistance is encouraged even on the first day. Your body's position in bed should be semi-flexed to take the tension off the suture line. You can use several pillows to prop your back and one or two under your knees to lift your thighs. Elevation of the legs is often helpful as well. It is important that you flex and extend (bend and kick) your knee joint for at least 5 minutes every hour while you are awake. This will promote venous return in your legs and help reduce swelling. If you do not do this, it is possible though very uncommon, for the blood in your veins to clot at your legs and possibly dislodge causing a pulmonary embolism. Simple exercise, as described, will prevent this. If you have any pain in your calves, call the office immediately.

The second week you may do some light stretching exercise. After the third week, you may resume walking and the stationary biking without overheating. Normal activities are resumed **slowly** while vigorous activities are restricted until the 6th week after surgery. Elevate your feet if there is ankle swelling. Avoid salty foods that will add to swelling. Though you might feel comfortable moving about, even the first day after surgery, movement should be done cautiously to prevent any stress on your incisions. Listen to your body. It is normal to feel tired while you are healing from this type of operation. Occasionally you will feel fine and be quite active only to find yourself fatigued the next day. Your body is going through a significant healing process so good nutrition and reasonable activity is important for an optimal recovery.

One of the most important parts of your recovery is to keep your drains clean. This process is called "stripping" your drains. The staff will instruct you on how to do this. Once at home, you will have to keep the drains free of blood and clots by "stripping" it, up to 6 times per day.

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