

ABDOMINOPLASTY / TUMMY TUCK / PANNICULECTOMY POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR PATIENTS

General Instructions

- Please contact us for any serious change in your symptoms, or any new symptoms that concern you.
- Walk on the evening of surgery, at least 3 times. You will need assistance at first to prevent falls.
- Walk for 15-20 minutes 6 times per day starting on post-operative day 1.
- Walk bent at the waist to avoid tension on the incision lint.
- Sit and sleep bent at the waist, also known as the 'beach chair' position.
- Do leg lifts/non-weighted leg exercises periodically while sitting or lying.
- Wear lower extremity compression stockings 23 hours a day for at least 2 weeks. These may be purchased online or at a drug store. They do not have to be custom fit.
- Practice deep breathing exercises.
- Drink water to stay hydrated.

Medication Instructions

- Take medications as prescribed.
- Over the counter Tylenol is recommended as the primary pain relief medication. Please check the label on your bottle to remain aware of dosages. Opioids can be used for breakthrough pain and should be weaned in the first week after surgery. Some patients only require Tylenol, but every patient is different. Complying with the general post-operative instructions will help with pain control as well.
- No more than 3 grams of Tylenol should be taken in a 24-hour period.
- You may develop constipation when taking opioid pain medications. You should continue drinking plenty of fluids. Take Colace twice a day starting on post-operative day 1. You may take your preferred over the counter bowel regimen as well. You should have regular bowel movements. You should avoid straining, which can be avoided with hydration and stool softeners.
- Do not drive or operate heavy machinery while taking any opioid pain medication. Use caution with opioid medications as they have addictive potential. Do not use other sedative medications, sleep aids, or alcohol in the post-operative setting.

Wound Care and Dressings

- You may take shower 48-72 hours after surgery. You should keep your back towards the shower head. You may let water gently run over your wound. Do not rub or scrub near the incision lines. If there are steri-strips on your incision, they can get wet in the shower.
- No pools, hot tubs, or submerging in bodies of water for 4-6 weeks.
- If steri-strips are covering your wound, leave these in place until your follow up appointment. If they fall off, you may leave them off.
- Wear compression garment/abdominal binder for 6 weeks for 24 hours a day. It may be removed for bathing. You should use the provided abdominal binder until your clinic follow up. After follow up, you may transition to your preferred compression garment.
- If you have drains in place, follow appropriate drain care regimens.
 - Drain care: measure total output over 24-hour periods:
 - You will need to empty the drains at least every 6-8 hours. Keep track of the 24-hour total.
 - Use a clean measuring cup to measure the fluid quantity and record the output. The 24-hour total will determine if the drain can be removed.
 - Typically, the drain should measure less than 30ml for 2 consecutive days before it is removed in the clinic.
 - Please keep drain sites clean using peroxide or alcohol swab and then cover with gauze dressing. This will help prevent infection.
 - Do not contaminate the inside of the drain.
 - If there is clear-pink drainage around the drain site, reinforce with clean gauze.
 - Call the clinic with any questions.

Activity

- No strenuous activity for 4 weeks. No running, biking, lifting weights, contact sports, swimming, golfing, etc. However, walking at least 6 times a day is recommended for general well-being and prevention of blood clots.
- Do not lift over 3 lbs for 4 weeks.
- No abdominal work outs, such as crunches or sit ups, for 2 months.

Recovery

- Most patients take at least 7-14 days off work for recovery. Time period varies by specific occupational demands. Some patients take up to 4-6 weeks off work. You will need help with household tasks for at least 7 days, depending on the level of demands.
- Typically, 60% to 80% of the swelling subsides by 6 weeks, but it takes a full 4 - 6 months for 100% of swelling to resolve, depending on the extent of the procedure.

Purchases to Consider

- Tylenol
- Miralax or other bowel regimen to have on hand if you develop constipation
- Compression garment: based on your preferences
- Compression stockings: Wear lower extremity compression stockings 23 hours a day for at least 2 weeks. They do not have to be custom fit.
- Peroxide or Alcohol to clean drain sites
- Sterile gauze to place over drain sites
- Gentle tape to hold gauze in place
- Well balanced diet including vegetables and protein for the healing period.
- Multivitamins

Call us if...

- If you are unable to keep fluids or medications down due to vomiting.
- If you have shaking chills, fever greater than 101.5 (F) degrees or 38 (C) degrees, increased redness, swelling or discharge from incision, chest pain, shortness of breath, or anything else that is troubling you.
- If you have questions outside clinic hours, call the main hospital line 617-667-7000 and ask to speak with the plastic surgery team.

Scar Care

- Options available from our clinic:
 - BioCorneum Silicone Scar Gel: Begin 2 weeks after surgery. Apply a thin layer twice a day after bathing. You may use this for 1-3 months.
 - Environ Alpha Hydroxy Derma-Lac Lotion PLUS Environ Vitamin A, C, & E Body Oil: May be used as an alternative to the SkinMedica Scar Recovery Gel or for long term scar/skin care.
- Topical over the counter moisturizers or silicone sheeting are also alternatives

Follow Up

- Your first clinic follow-up after surgery will most likely be within 1-2 weeks after surgery. If you do not have an appointment scheduled, please call the clinic to schedule an appointment.
- At your one-week clinic visit, the dressings will be removed.
- The Plastic Surgery Clinic phone number is: 617-632-7827