



Post-Operative Instructions for Abdominoplasty (Tummy Tuck)

Thank you for choosing our practice for your abdominoplasty procedure. To ensure a safe and smooth recovery, please read and follow these instructions carefully. If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to contact our office.

1. Rest and Activity

- **Take It Easy:** Rest is essential in the first 48–72 hours after surgery. Arrange for someone to assist you at home during this time, as you may experience discomfort and limited mobility.
- **No Heavy Lifting:** Avoid lifting anything heavier than 5 pounds (e.g., young children, heavy bags) for at least 4–6 weeks.
- **Walking:** Begin walking as soon as possible to promote circulation and reduce the risk of blood clots. Start with short, light walks around your home, gradually increasing as you feel comfortable.
- **Bent Position:** You may need to walk in a slightly bent-over position for the first 1–2 weeks to avoid straining your incision. Do not force yourself to stand fully upright until advised by your surgeon.
- **Exercise:** Refrain from vigorous exercise, core workouts, or any activity that engages your abdominal muscles for at least 6–8 weeks, or until cleared by your surgeon.

2. Pain Management

- **Pain Medication:** Take prescribed pain medication as directed. You may transition to over-the-counter pain relievers like acetaminophen if needed, but avoid

ibuprofen or aspirin unless your surgeon advises otherwise, as these can increase bleeding.

- **Comfort Measures:** Applying a cold compress to the area around your incision can help reduce swelling and discomfort. Do not place ice directly on your skin, and limit application to 10–15 minutes at a time.

3. Incision Care and Dressings

- **Surgical Dressings:** Keep your surgical dressings dry and intact for the first 24–48 hours unless instructed otherwise by your surgeon. Your surgeon may place you in a compression garment, which you should wear as directed.
- **Showering:** You may be advised to avoid showering for the first 48 hours. When you do shower, ensure that water does not directly hit your incision. Pat the area dry with a clean towel afterward.
- **Avoid Baths and Swimming:** Do not submerge your incision in water (baths, hot tubs, pools) for at least 4–6 weeks or until your surgeon gives you clearance.
- **Scar Care:** Once your incisions have fully healed, you may be advised to apply silicone sheets, scar gel, or other treatments to reduce scarring. Follow your surgeon's recommendations.

4. Compression Garments

- **Wear Your Compression Garment:** Wear your abdominal binder or compression garment as instructed (typically 23 hours a day for the first few weeks). This helps minimize swelling, support your muscles, and improve healing.
- **Remove Only for Showering:** Remove the compression garment only when showering or as instructed by your surgeon. Ensure it is snug but not overly tight to avoid restricting blood flow.

5. Managing Swelling and Drainage

- **Swelling:** Some degree of swelling and bruising is normal and may take several weeks to subside. Swelling can take up to 6 months to fully resolve.
- **Drainage Tubes:** If you have drainage tubes, follow your surgeon's instructions for care and maintenance. Keep the area clean and record the amount of drainage. Your surgeon will remove the drains when fluid output is minimal, typically within 1–2 weeks.

6. Diet and Hydration

- **Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated, especially if you're taking pain medications, which can cause constipation.
- **Balanced Diet:** Eat a nutrient-rich, balanced diet to support healing. High-fiber foods can help alleviate constipation. Consider taking a stool softener if prescribed.
- **Avoid Alcohol and Smoking:** Do not consume alcohol for at least 1–2 weeks post-surgery, as it can interfere with healing. Smoking should be avoided for at least 4–6 weeks, as it can impair circulation and delay wound healing.

7. Warning Signs to Watch For

Please contact our office immediately if you experience any of the following:

- **Fever:** A temperature above 101°F (38.3°C) may indicate an infection.
- **Excessive Bleeding:** Persistent bleeding from your incisions, beyond what was expected, needs immediate attention.
- **Severe Pain or Tightness:** Severe pain not relieved by medication, or a sudden increase in pain, especially in your abdomen or legs, could indicate a complication.
- **Signs of Infection:** Redness, warmth, excessive swelling, or foul-smelling discharge at the incision site.
- **Difficulty Breathing or Chest Pain:** This could indicate a blood clot or other serious condition. Seek emergency care immediately.

8. Follow-Up Care

- **Attend All Scheduled Follow-Up Appointments:** It's essential to attend all your follow-up visits so your surgeon can monitor your progress and remove any sutures or drains as needed.
- **Contact Information:** If you have any questions or concerns during your recovery, please contact our office at [phone number]. We're here to support you.

Additional Tips for a Smooth Recovery

- **Elevate Your Legs:** Elevate your legs while lying down to reduce swelling and improve circulation.
- **Pillow Support:** Use extra pillows under your knees and back to maintain a semi-bent position while sleeping. This can alleviate tension on your abdominal muscles.

- **Loose Clothing:** Wear loose, comfortable clothing that won't put pressure on your abdomen.

We are committed to your successful recovery. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any concerns. Your well-being is our priority!

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