

# ***Abdominoplasty Post-Op Instructions***

## **Overview:**

You have had surgery to remove extra tissue around your abdomen. This is generally a big operation and you can expect pain, fatigue, and a slow improvement over the next 6-8 weeks in how you are feeling.

## **After Surgery:**

You may tire easily for the first few weeks after surgery and will therefore need plenty of rest. In order to protect incisions and promote healing, strenuous activity must be limited for 4-6 weeks after surgery. Your abdomen will feel tight. Maintaining a slouched or bent over position will feel more comfortable and place less strain on your incision. Lying on your side or with pillows under your knees and standing with a slight bend at the waist can help. You may need to prepare to have assistance with activities around the house. Return to work varies between 1-6 weeks, depending on the nature of your work.

This surgery is associated with temporary bruising, swelling, and soreness. Most of the swelling is gone after a few weeks but can take up to 3 months to resolve.

An abdominal binder may help your abdomen feel more comfortable and supported during the first few weeks of healing. You can purchase one through One Bracing; occasionally we are able to obtain one for you from the surgical facility pharmacy on your day of surgery. Please check with the office if you should purchase one in advance.

## **Incision Care:**

You may remove your dressings and shower 48 hours after surgery. Special surgical tape (Steri-strips (thin tapes) or Prineo (a light purple colored mesh) has been placed with a dry dressing on top. Do not remove the surgical tape; it will remain in place 2-3 weeks and will be removed in the office and is designed to get wet in the shower. You may use soap and water, rinse, and use a soft towel to pat dry. New dry dressings may be applied as required to absorb small amounts of expected drainage from the incision.

The sutures are dissolvable, but sometimes get pushed out through the incision before they can dissolve. The skin will close 2-3 days after they come out, but it might look like small pustules or pimples when they push out through the skin.

Scar care and an information sheet will be reviewed in your postoperative visits.

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If you have drains in place, the recovery room nurse will show you how to empty these and keep track of the drainage. These will be removed in the doctor's office 4-7 days following surgery, typically once each drain is emptying less than 30 cc/24 hours. Each drain may be removed at a different time. Each person is individual as to the amount of drainage that will occur, and this is why there is such a variance in removal time.

### **Activity and Care at Home:**

It is beneficial to stay moderately mobile right away and take leisurely walks once you are comfortable. You should drink plenty of fluids, (no citric juice or diet soft drinks) for the first several days following surgery. If you are not urinating as much as normal, increase the amount of fluid you are drinking. If after this you continue to urinate less than normal, call the doctor. You may have had rectus plication, in which the abdominal muscles are tightened. If you have had the plication, you should avoid heavy lifting for a period of 6 weeks and continue to wear the abdominal binder for 6 weeks. If you did not have the plication done, wear the abdominal garment for at least 2 weeks.

You must not operate vehicles, boats, power tools, or machinery for the first 24 hours after a general anesthetic.

### **Pain Management:**

To manage pain, take Ibuprofen (Advil) and plain Tylenol every 6 hours for the first 48 hours. If that is not sufficient, then take the prescription medication. Do not take more Tylenol or Ibuprofen than is recommended on the bottle in 24 hours. Ice or gel cool packs may help in the first couple of days, but do not leave ice on for longer than 10 minutes at a time.

### **IMPORTANT:**

The surgery will be performed under general anaesthetic therefore must not operate motor vehicles, boats, power tools or machinery for the first 24 hours. You may drive after three days or when you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication.

If you experience increasing rather than decreasing pain, bleeding not controlled with pressure, excessive swelling or bruising that occurs only on one side, increased swelling or redness around the wound, increased drainage from incisions or in your drains, foul odour, fever, chills, please call your surgeon's office. If you experience shortness of breath, or arm or leg pain, call 9-1-1 or visit your emergency department.