

Abdominoplasty (Tummy Tuck) Post Operative Instructions

These are some guidelines to help you during your recovery. They are not meant to be all-inclusive and you should call the office if you have additional questions or concerns.

1. Prior to your surgery it is important not to take aspirin, Motrin, or blood thinning products (including herbals or supplements) to minimize the chance of bleeding during your operation.
2. You will need a family member, spouse, or friend bring you to and from the medical facility. You will not be able to transport yourself home after surgery.
3. The surgery generally takes approximately 1.5 hour to 2.5 hours to perform.
4. Prescriptions for an antibiotic and pain medication will be given prior to your discharge home. Please take the full course of the antibiotic as directed and pain medication as needed.
5. The first post op visit to the office will take place 7-10 days after your procedure. We highly recommend you call the office or have a representative call to make the appointment.
6. You will have one or two drains placed at the time of surgery to help remove fluid that collects under the skin. Typically they stay in for 2-3 weeks. The nursing staff or I will explain how they work prior to discharge. They should be emptied 3-4 times per day. You should record the amount of drainage in milliliters (mL) and write it on a piece of paper each time you empty the suction bulb. The mls are written on the side of the suction bulb. The drains are ready to come out in the office when they are draining 30mls or less in a 24 hour period. □
7. An On-Q "pain buster ball" is placed for pain control, the device will not require any care until it is completely empty. You should notice it slowly emptying over time. If it is empty you may remove it by tracing the catheters to the skin, removing the covering film, then pulling the catheter out. Please refer to the pamphlet that accompanies your discharge instruction sheets for further information. □
8. An abdominal binder is put on at the time of surgery. It should be snug but not too tight. It should be comfortable to wear. If it is not you may loosen or reposition it. Most patients wear the binder continuously for 3-4 weeks. The more support you have, the better the result. It is okay to remove it and wash it as needed.
9. You should sleep on your back with your waist slightly flexed until you feel that you can lie flat without much tension. This usually takes 1-2 weeks.
10. You will have white paper band aids (steri-strips) over the incision sites. DO NOT REMOVE THEM. They can get wet and will not cause a problem. After bathing, pat them dry. Over the course of 2-4 weeks, they will slowly start to fray and peel off by themselves. If you wish, you can trim them as they become loose.
11. You may sponge bath or shower 48-72 hours after your procedure. You may remove the dressing and support garment/binder. When you take your first shower have someone nearby to help in case you feel dizzy. Using tepid/Luke warm soapy water, allow it to rinse over your body, followed by patting dry the area.

- Avoid hot or very warm water to prevent engorgement and increase swelling of soft tissues. Replace the binder or garment after bathing. We highly encourage using a support for 3-4 weeks after your procedure. This will help minimize swelling and give your body the support needed to promote the healing process.
12. It is okay to change your dressings as needed to keep clean and dry. Maxi pads work well as inexpensive surgical gauze and they don't interfere with the healing process.
 13. Daily activity is encouraged but it should not be strenuous initially. It is important to be up and about to keep blood circulating in your legs. Lifting should be no more than 5-10 pounds for several weeks. Driving will be restricted until you no longer need narcotics for pain control and physically stable. The average time returning to driving takes approximately 3-4 weeks.
 14. Return to work is variable and depends on the type of job. Approximately 2-3 weeks is when a majority of patients can return to either limited restriction or full work duties. □
 15. Scar quality depends on many things such a skin type, age, tension etc. Topical silicone products like Scar Guard are recommended to help improve their appearance. These are begun when you are fully healed and the steri-strips are off. Occasionally laser or small revisions are done to the scar typically 3-4 months after surgery.
 16. If you experience high fevers (T. 101), excess drainage from the incision(s), excessive swelling, redness, pain, or foul odor, please contact the office at (302) 888-0508.