



MID(AMERICA

INSTITUTE OF PLASTIC & COSMETIC SURGERY

POST-SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS: ABDOMINOPLASTY

Patient Name _____

Surgical Facility _____

Surgery Date _____

Once your surgery is completed, you must follow all the instructions given to you in order to heal properly and have a good outcome.

The following instructions are your obligation. Use this as a checklist of progress as you heal. Included are normal post-surgical experiences and key health considerations that may be a cause of concern.

TYPICAL POST-OPERATIVE SYMPTOMS

Typical symptoms of abdominoplasty and signs to watch for after surgery include the following:

Tightness and stiffness in treated areas. Bruising, swelling, redness, tingling, burning, or intermittent shooting pain. These are normal experiences as the skin, tissues, and sensory nerves heal. Pain medication will help you cope with any discomfort. **Consistent sharp pain should be reported to our office immediately.**

Skin firmness, hypersensitivity, or lack of sensitivity. This is normal and will gradually resolve over time.

Shiny skin or any itchy feeling. Swelling can cause the skin in treated areas to appear shiny. As the healing process advances, you may experience a mild to severe itchy feeling. An antihistamine like Benadryl can help to alleviate severe, constant itchiness. **If the skin becomes red and hot to the touch, contact our office immediately.**

Asymmetry. The two sides of your body may heal differently. One side of your body may look or feel quite different from the other in the days following surgery. This is normal. **It should not be a significant difference.**

CALL THE OFFICE IMMEDIATELY IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- **A high fever (over 101°), severe nausea and vomiting, continued dizziness, or incoherent behavior such as hallucinations.**
- **Any pain that cannot be controlled by your pain medication.**
- **Bright red skin that is hot to the touch.**
- **Excessive bleeding or fluid seeping through the incisions.**
- **A severely misshapen region anywhere on your abdomen or bruising that is localized to one specific point of the abdomen.**
- **Shortness of breath, calf tenderness, or chest pain. If severe, please go to your nearest emergency room.**

DAY OF SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS

Whether you are released after surgery or after an overnight stay in a recovery center or hospital, you will only be released to the care of a responsible adult. All these instructions must be clear to the adult who will monitor your health and support you around the clock in the first 24 hours following surgery.

Do not stand fully upright. Standing fully upright could compromise your results and could cause serious injury. A walker or crutches may be used if you need assistance.

Rest, but not bed rest. While rest is important in the early stages of healing, equally important is that you are ambulatory, meaning that you are walking under your own strength. Spend 10 minutes every 2 hours engaged in light walking indoors as you recover.

Recline, do not lie down. This will be more comfortable for you and can reduce swelling. Always keep your head elevated. Do not bend forward or over.

Good nutrition. Fluids are critical following surgery. Stick to non-carbonated, non-alcoholic, caffeine-free, and green tea-free beverages including fruit juices, water, milk, and yogurt drinks. You must consume at least 8 ounces of fluid every 2 hours. Stick with soft, bland, nutritious food for the first 24 hours.

Take all medication exactly as prescribed.

Change your incision dressings. Your incisions will seep fluid and some blood for a short time after surgery. Keep dressings clean and dry. Do not remove any steri-strips even if they are over stitches. **Be sure to re-apply compression garments after removing for hygiene.**

Wear your compression or elastic wraps around the clock. Your compression garment must be worn for 23 hours a day for 6 weeks for optimal results.

Do not smoke. Smoking can greatly impair your safety prior to surgery and your ability to heal following surgery. Avoid all nicotine products including gum, patches, vaping, etc. This includes second-hand smoke as well.

Relax. Do not engage in any stressful activities. Do not lift, push, or pull anything. Take care of no one and let others tend to you.

No lifting over 20 pounds. This is a restriction for 6 weeks.

TWO TO SEVEN DAYS FOLLOWING SURGERY

During this time, you will progress as each day passes. Ease into your daily activities. Do not drive if you are taking pain medication.

Continue to cleanse wounds as directed. You may shower. Take a warm, not hot shower. Do not take a bath. Limit your shower to 10 minutes. Do not remove any steri-strips. Do not rub your incisions. Apply a fragrance-free moisturizer to the surrounding skin, but not on your incisions. Make sure someone is there to help and/or supervise you during your first shower.

Take antibiotic medications and supplements as directed. Take pain medication and muscle relaxants only as needed. You may wish to switch from prescriptive pain medication to acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

Continue to wear your elastic wraps or compression garment around the clock.

Massage. You may start lymphatic massage therapy to help soften any firmness or contour irregularities. This is not mandatory.

Do not resume any exercise other than regular walking. Walking is essential every day to prevent the formation of blood clots.

No sun exposure. If you plan to go outdoors for any reason, use sun protection including wearing protective clothing. Avoid any direct sun exposure.

ONE TO FOUR WEEKS FOLLOWING SURGERY

As you resume your normal daily activities, you must continue proper care and healing.

Continue your wound care as directed.

Exercise. You still have a weight restriction of 20 pounds. Continue walking. No weight bearing or abdominal crunching exercises. Do not engage your core. Walking is essential every day to prevent the formation of blood clots. A daily, brisk 20-minute walk is recommended.

Do not smoke. While incisions may have healed, smoking deprives your body of necessary oxygen that can result in poorly healed, wide, raised scars.

Continue to wear your elastic wrap or compression garment as directed. This is essential for your skin to conform to new contours. If your skin does not conform, revision procedures to reduce excess skin may be recommended.

Practice good sun protection. Do not expose skin in abdomen to direct sunlight. If you are outdoors, apply a minimum of SPF 30 to the abdomen at least 30 minutes prior to sun

exposure and wear protective clothing. The skin of your abdomen is highly susceptible to sunburn or the formation of irregular, darkened pigmentation.

Follow-up as directed.

SIX WEEKS FOLLOWING SURGERY

Healing will progress and your body settles into a more final shape and position.

You may ease into your regular fitness routine. However, realize that your body may require some time to return to previous strength.

Discomfort or tightness and tingling of the skin will resolve.

No need to resume smoking. You have now gone 12 weeks (6 weeks prior to surgery and 6 weeks following) without. For your long-term health, there is no need to resume smoking.

YOUR FIRST YEAR

Continue healthy nutrition, fitness and, sun protection.

Your scars will continue to refine. If they become raised, red, thickened, or appear to widen, contact our office. Early intervention is important to achieving well-healed scars. Scars are generally healed to fine incision lines one year after surgery.

A one-year post surgery follow-up is recommended. However, you may call our office at any time with your concerns or for needed follow-up.

Your body will change with age. The appearance of your body will change too. Although the outcomes from abdominoplasty are generally permanent, any significant weight gain or loss, pregnancy, or the normal influences of aging can cause changes to your appearance. You may wish to undergo revision surgery at a later date to help maintain your appearance throughout life. Contact our office with any of your questions or concerns at any time.