

ABDOMINOPLASTY

Pre-Operative and Post-Operative Patient Instructions

WATCH PRE AND POST OP RECOVERY VIDEOS



[Preop Instructions Video](#)



[Post-op Instructions Video](#)



[Drain Management Video](#)

PRE-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR ABDOMINOPLASTY

SHOPPING LIST



Prescriptions

Submitted to your pharmacy. Your pharmacy should contact you when ready to pick up.



Stool Softener (preferably MiraLAX)

Helps with constipation associated with narcotic pain relievers.



Tylenol (Acetaminophen)

Alternative to narcotic pain medication if pain is not severe. Do NOT take NSAIDS.



No-Slip Socks

To prevent accidental falls and aid in safe movement around home.



NIGHT BEFORE SURGERY

- **DO NOT EAT OR DRINK ANYTHING AFTER MIDNIGHT OR SURGERY WILL BE CANCELLED.** If prescribed, take medications with a small sip of water.
- **Set Up Home Recovery Area.** This may include pillows, blankets, books, television, and anything else to assist with a comfortable recovery.
- **Bathing.** You can shower but do not apply lotion, perfume, hair product, etc.

DAY OF SURGERY

- **Dress Comfortably:** Dress in comfortable, clean, and loose-fitting clothes. Shirts that can be buttoned or zipped up are preferred.
- **DO NOT wear** any makeup, jewelry, cosmetic creams, hair products, deodorant, sunscreen, and remove all piercings.

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR ABDOMINOPLASTY

MEDICATIONS

- **Pain:** You will be prescribed a pain medication for post-operative pain control. If your discomfort after surgery is not strong you are welcomed to take Tylenol in place of the prescribed medication. Do not take the Tylenol with the pain medication, often the medication you are prescribed will have Tylenol in it. **Do not exceed 4,000 mg of Tylenol in any 24-hour period.** Take medication with food to minimize risk of nausea.
- **Nausea:** A common side effect after general anesthesia and strong medications. If you are experiencing nausea, we advise that you take your nausea medication.
- **Constipation:** You will experience constipation if taking narcotic pain relievers. MiraLAX or other over the counter laxatives are recommended. Do not wait to take it until you are constipated.
- **Medications to Avoid:** Take only those medications approved or prescribed by your surgeon.

NUTRITION

- **Diet:** A light low-fat diet is best after surgery. You may start a regular diet the day after your surgery, as long as you are not feeling nauseous or vomiting. Start with liquids for the first few hours after surgery and then slowly advance to more solid foods.

- **Hydration:** Stay hydrated by drinking 8 -10 glasses of water a day. Avoid alcohol for 48 hours and while taking pain medications.

ACTIVITY

- **Movement is Important:** Make sure you are up and walking around immediately after your surgery. When lying down in bed or on the couch, make sure you are moving your legs and ankles. Take deep breaths frequently to keep your lungs clear.
- **Exercise:** Normal activity can be resumed a few days after surgery. You can resume an exercise regimen in approximately 1 week after surgery, though start easy and build back up to your previous exercise levels. Just know that swelling may transiently be worse with exercise.
- **Compression Garment:** Expect to wear a compression garment for 4-6 weeks after liposuction. The garment should fit snug but not too tight that you have trouble breathing or you develop wounds or blisters from the compression. Always wear your garment except for when you shower or wash it. This will help with minimizing swelling and help in contouring the body. You may be asked to switch to a spandex type of garment after a few weeks of wearing the garment that we have provided you.
- **Driving:** Do NOT operate a vehicle or make important decisions until you have been off pain medications for 24 hours. Use good judgment.
- **Travel:** Automobile travel can resume immediately, though frequent breaks are needed approximately every 2 hours to prevent blood pooling and clots. Airline travel is restricted until 1 week postop. You will notice increased swelling with airline travel which can happen even 6-8 weeks postop due to the pressure changes that occur.
- **Return to work:** Most patients require approximately 5-7days off work depending on their job responsibilities. Returning to work with a light schedule initially or even part-time can be beneficial as well.
- **Sexual Intercourse:** Sex can be resumed when you feel ready with no restrictions.

BATHING

- **Showering:** You may shower with assistance the day following surgery. Remove your garment and any compression foam. Incisions are covered with a waterproof dressing and require no attention. Replace garment after your shower.
- **Hot Tubs/Baths/Swimming Pools:** No tub baths or jacuzzi until your incisions have healed, and approved by your surgeon, which is usually around 2 weeks. It is best to wait one month for hot tubs as they tend to have more bacteria than regular chlorinated swimming pools.

HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR INCISIONS

- **Incisions:** Your incisions are covered with a waterproof dressing. No dressing changes or incision care is required. After your first postop visit, the dressing will be removed, and tape will be applied. Additional tape is provided so you can continue a planned scar regimen.
- **Stitches:** All stitches are dissolvable.

HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR DRAINS

- **Drains:** Suction drains are needed occasionally after an abdominoplasty. They prevent fluid build-up and help with healing. If drains are placed, you will need to empty their contents and record output. The nurses in the recovery room will provide detailed instructions. You should watch our video “Management of Drains” on our website.
<https://youtu.be/HvICYdnfyu4>

WHAT TO EXPECT

- **Drainage:** Drainage can occur from the incision sites for the first 24-72 hours. The drainage will be blood tinged. You may use gauze or a light pad to reinforce post-op dressings if this occurs.
- **Bruising:** You can expect to have bruising. The bruising can be impressive depending on the extent of liposuction performed. Most bruises will heal after about 2-3 weeks. The bruise will go from a purplish color to a yellow/green shade as it starts to resolve.
- **Swelling:** Swelling is to be expected with liposuction for weeks and sometimes months. The swelling can improve with intermittent rest and compression garments. Exercise and physical activity can transiently worsen swelling but is encouraged.
- **Itching:** Itching at the incision sites is normal for a few days. You may take Benadryl to help with this.
- **Sensory Changes in Skin:** You may notice numbness or a tingling sensation around your incision sites and throughout the liposuction areas which is normal. You can expect a return of normal sensation after a few months.
- **Scarring:** Scars are small and minimal and may take up to a year to fully heal. Tape is used for scar management, though a topical silicone gel can also be used if desired.
- **Tightness:** You may not be able to stand up straight for the first week which is normal. By the second week you will gradually notice that you are able to stand more upright.

DO NOT'S

- **DO NOT apply hydrogen peroxide to incision sites.** Keep postop dressings in place until follow-up.
- **DO NOT soak in baths, jacuzzies or hot tubs** until all incisions have fully healed.
- **DO NOT take Aspirin, Ibuprofen, Naproxen, or other blood thinners** until your surgeon advises you it is safe.
- **DO NOT apply heating pads or ice packs to the treated areas** unless otherwise instructed by your surgeon.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS – WHEN TO CALL THE OFFICE (703-481-0002) OR GO TO THE HOSPITAL

- **Signs of Infection:** Spreading of redness, worsening of swelling, increased drainage or drainage of pus, worsening pain, warmth at incision site and temperature over 101°F.
- **Excessive Bleeding:** If the dressings are saturated with bright red blood and you are having to make very frequent dressing changes.
- **Other Emergency Situations:** Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chest pain, lightheadedness that does not quickly resolve, severe vomiting, pain, or asymmetric swelling in your legs.