

Pre & Post-Operative Instructions for Abdominoplasty

Charleston Plastic Surgery

You have undergone major surgery. For a speedier recovery, please follow these instructions:

- Someone must be with you for the first 24-48 hours following surgery. This is to make sure you are taking your medicine properly, to assist you when walking (if needed) and to get in touch with our office for questions/concerns (if needed).
- You may experience a sore throat after surgery. This is common after anesthesia and will clear up in a few days.
- There is no need to pre-fill your prescription medications that Dr. Harvey prescribes. ALL your prescription medications will be ready for you post-operatively in a bag that you will get from The Surgery Center *on the day of your procedure*.
- **NAUSEA:** Mild nausea is common after surgery. If you have severe nausea, please use Phenergan suppository, as directed. If vomiting occurs, use ice chips until clear liquids can be tolerated.
- **PAIN:** You will be given prescription medications for pain and muscle spasms, please take for severe pain, as directed on the bottle. Starting the day after surgery we want you to take Ibuprofen. *You will be taking this in addition to your prescription pain medication to help reduce inflammation and swelling.* When you are off the prescription pain medicine during the day, you are welcome to increase the Ibuprofen to reduce inflammation/swelling AND for pain. You may also take Tylenol [if you are allergic to Ibuprofen or if you are not allowed to NSAIDS]. *Narcotics are known to cause constipation, please drink plenty of water.* You may use an over-the-counter stool softener if you have not had a bowel movement in 3 days [milk of magnesia, take every 6 hours until you have a BM]
- **SMOKING:** NO nicotine is tolerated at least 4 weeks prior to surgery and for at least 8 weeks after surgery. Avoid secondary smoke. Nicotine will constrict blood vessels, leading to poor wound healing.
- **DRIVING:** Do not drive a car/operate machinery for at least 48 hours after surgery and until you are no longer taking narcotics.
- **EXERCISE/ACTIVITY:** Please be sure to walk around the house the day after surgery to prevent post-operative complications. Please be sure to have assistance when you first get out of bed. Gradually work up to your normal daily routine. For the first week, you should not lift anything greater than 10lbs and walking should be your only form of exercise. Further lifting instructions will be given to you at your first post-operative appointment but typically you should not lift anything greater than 30lbs and only low impact exercises from week 2 to week 6.
- **REST:** When you return home from surgery, please try to rest as much as possible for the first 12 hours. Elevate your head on 2 or more pillows and place a pillow behind your knees so you are not lying flat. Some patients find a recliner more comfortable for the first few nights after surgery. *It is imperative that you begin light walking around the house the day after surgery to prevent post-operative complications.*
- **COMPLICATIONS:** If you experience a sudden fever of 101 or greater, increased swelling, redness, heat, or profuse bleeding please call our office at any time: (843) 722-1985

Specific Instructions:

- You can expect to have 1 or 2 drains in place when you wake up from surgery. These drains are suction drains that are very simple to care for. **The drainage bulb must stay compressed.** If the bulb is not compressed, the drain is NOT working. Drainage from the drain must be measured and recorded on

your drainage output sheet (you will receive this after surgery, from The Surgery Center). *Please remember to bring this drainage recording sheet to ALL post-op appointments.*

- Drainage typically is the consistency and color of blood for the first 24-96 hours. Drainage may start to decrease but it will start to increase with activity around 48-72 hours. Bloody drainage may start to become clear and can turn red, pink, orange, or yellow. This is normal as long as there is a clear tint to the drainage. If there is pus or green drainage, please contact our office.
- You will leave surgery in an **abdominal binder**. You will wear this binder **24/7**. You will remove this garment for showering and to launder. Drains will typically stay in for **7-14 days** after surgery. *Antibiotics are required to be taken the entire time you have a drain.* Once your drain is removed, you will be placed in a **girdle**. Additional information will be given at your follow up appointments.
- **You will be in a compression garment for a total of 6 weeks.** The first 2 garments: a binder and girdle, will be provided for you. For the remaining 3 weeks, **you will need to purchase a Spanx like compression garment** to wear after the girdle.
- You will return to our office 48 hours after surgery.
- After your first post-operative appointment, you will be instructed to shower when you return home. *Please be sure to shower daily, after the first post-operative appointment to prevent wound infection.*
- **LIPOSUCTION PATIENTS:** If you are having liposuction of the back/ hip area, please change these bandages *before bedtime the day of your surgery* and 1-2x on the first post-operative day. This will help prevent wound infection.
 - Remove the binder.
 - Remove the saturated gauze/tape on the back side of the body only.
 - Gauze on the front of the body should be left alone.
 - Please wipe the liposuction areas with a wet wash cloth and pat them dry.
 - Place a woman's sanitary napkin (or gauze and tape) over the liposuction incisions.
 - Reapply the binder. It should offer firm compression without inhibiting your ability to take deep breaths.

****SHOWER INSTRUCTIONS****

- Remove abdominal binder and all gauze/tape prior to showering & throw all gauze/tape away.
- Wash your incisions with your fingers using a mild soap: DOVE (get everything nice & soapy)
- Once done showering. Gently pat your incisions dry.
- Apply a very thin layer of Aquaphor/Flanders ointment to your incision and cover with gauze.
- Re-apply abdominal binder.
- *After 48 hours, you must shower daily (from the neck down) to prevent wound infection.*