

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Abdominoplasty (Tummy Tuck)

Our goal is to ensure your safety, help you have the best outcome possible and help you feel comfortable during your recovery. Please follow these instructions on how to take care of yourself following your procedure.

HOSPITAL STAY:

- Some patients are discharged home the same day as their surgery. Some patients may be required to stay overnight and may have a bladder catheter in place. If you do stay overnight, you will be discharged early the next morning and your catheter will be removed by a nurse before leaving the hospital.

GOING HOME:

- Your surgeon will check on you before you are discharged and the nursing staff will ensure you are ready to go home. Please arrange to have someone drive you home after your surgery. To ensure your safety, you are required to have a responsible adult stay with you for the first 24 hours after you go home.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER SURGERY:

- After surgery, it is important for you to rest. Rest/sleep in a reclining position, this will be more comfortable during your recovery. Please do not lay completely flat and always keep your head/shoulders in an elevated position.
- It is equally important that you move your body to ensure you do not get blood clots. In the days that follow, go for frequent short walks around the house to keep your body moving. Your aim should be to be up walking every waking hour of the day.
- You may experience nausea from the anesthesia following your surgery. You may wish to start with clear fluids and slowly proceed to a soft diet when you are able to do so.
- It is also very important that you stay hydrated, so please ensure you drink plenty of liquids (non-alcoholic).

THE GARMENT:

- You have been provided with a garment to hold your dressings and support your surgery in the optimal position. Please wear it for 24 hours a day (including to sleep) for the first 6 weeks. The garment should be tight enough to feel supportive, but should not cause puckering or indentations in your skin, or restrict your breathing. The abdominal binders should support across your abdomen extending down just below your hip bones and upper part of your buttocks. The garment can be quite stiff. Many people find that a light shirt or tank top worn next to the skin with the garment overtop is much more comfortable.
- You may wash the garment as required, but while you are not wearing the garment, please be sure you keep your movement/activity level to a minimum.

DRAINS:

- Drains may have been placed to prevent fluid from collecting under the skin. Fluid will range in colour from purple/red to pink/yellow. Your nurse will instruct you on how to empty the drains and record the volume at home. The drains will be removed when daily total volume is less than 20-30cc for two consecutive days (usually between 5 – 10 days after your surgery). After your drains are removed, you may notice pink/yellow fluid leaking from the drain holes or incisions. Please contact our office if this does not slow after 2 more days.

INCISIONS:

- Keep your incisions dry and covered until your first postoperative visit. You may change the outer gauze if it gets soiled (sanitary napkins or disposable lactation pads can be used). Keep the tape intact and replace the garment. You may sponge bath at any time, but keep the incisions and drain sites dry.
- When you are allowed to shower after your postoperative visit - remove the outer padding and gauze (yellow or red drainage on the dressing is normal). Shower normally, then pat the incision dry. Please apply Polysporin or Vaseline to any scabbed areas. Some areas of localized scabbing may last up to 2 weeks.
- If there is drainage, cover your incisions with gauze, sanitary napkin or disposable lactation pad and put your postop garment back on.
- Your sutures should dissolve on their own, but please contact our office if you have any concerns.
- It is a good idea to protect scars from the sun (with clothing or good sunscreen) for at least 12 months to prevent burning and permanent darkening of the area.

PAIN & MEDICATION:

- It is normal to have pain and discomfort following your procedure. Please take following medication as directed:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Tylenol
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ibuprofen
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____

<input type="checkbox"/>	Prescription Medication: <u>Celebrex (Celecoxib)</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prescription Medication: <u>Morphine</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prescription Medication: <u>Antibiotic</u>

- Please take Tylenol and Celebrex (Celecoxib) as directed after your surgery. Do not wait until you are uncomfortable before taking your next dose. Maintain baseline comfort with these medications for the first few days after your surgery. If you require additional relief after taking Tylenol and Celebrex, you may take morphine or another prescribed pain medication as directed.
- If you have been provided with a prescription for antibiotics, please ensure you take the medication as directed.
- If you have worsening pain not controlled by your medication, please contact our office for instructions.

SWELLING AND BRUISING:

- Swelling and bruising will peak 2-3 days following surgery. This should reduce significantly over the first 2 weeks. Your skin will feel slightly tight during this time.

ACTIVITIES:

- As mentioned above, it is important for you to rest. Please sleep in a reclining position for the first 2-4 weeks following your surgery to ensure your comfort.
- It is equally important that you move your body to ensure you do not get blood clots. Please go for frequent short walks around the house to keep your body moving. Your aim should be to be up walking every waking hour of the day.
- Please avoid bending over and do not stand fully straight until instructed to do so.
- Please avoid strenuous activities and do not exercise your abdomen/trunk or go jogging for 6 weeks. Low impact activities such as walking are strongly encouraged.
- Your surgeon may advise you on other specific restrictions based on your case.
- Please no smoking. Smoking may increase the chance of complications.
- Do not swim in lakes, pools or use hot tubs for at least 2 weeks following surgery.
- It generally takes up to 6-8 weeks to feel normal again and resume regular activities. Please ask your surgeon if you have any questions about activity level during the healing process.

WORK:

- You will likely be ready to return to work within 2-6 weeks depending on your occupation and type of physical exertion required. If you require a medical note for your employer, please contact your Patient Care Coordinator and they will be happy to help you.

DRIVING:

- You must be pain free and off all pain medication before driving. You may wish to take a licensed adult with you for your first short trip.

THE RESULT:

- Your abdominal skin will settle and soften over 3 months. Your incisions will fade and soften over the next 18 months. Surgical swelling will settle in 3 months and the final contour will become apparent.

If you have any of the following, call our office (during business hours), your family doctor or present to the Emergency Department:

Signs of Infection:

- Pus-like drainage from the incision, grey or green.
- Redness that spreads beyond the incision.
- New pain, getting worse after 3 or 4 days.
- Fever, chills, sweats, aches and pains (flu-like symptoms).

Other Symptoms

- Rapid swelling, pain and firmness.
- Pain in your calves
- Pain with breathing and/or shortness of breath
- Inability to pass gas, uncontrolled nausea and vomiting

Questions not addressed by this handout

Special Instructions: _____

POSTOPERATIVE CALL:

- The nurse assigned to your care may call you the day after your surgery to check in. Please let her know of any questions or concerns.

FOR AFTER-HOURS EMERGENCIES:

- Call the Queensway Carleton Hospital at 613-721-2000 and the Plastic Surgeon on-call will be paged.

FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENT:

- Your Patient Care Coordinator will call you to confirm your appointment. Please call us at 613-232-7777 if you have any questions or concerns.

YOUR APPOINTMENT HAS BEEN SCHEDULED FOR: _____