

Postoperative Abdominoplasty Instructions

1. Take medications as directed. **DO NOT** mix alcohol and medications. **DO NOT** take aspirin or any medications containing aspirin for two weeks. **DO NOT** smoke or be around anyone who is smoking to prevent wound break down or tissue death. If you are taking an antibiotic, be sure to finish it.
2. **Stay in a flexed position at all times for the first seven days. Walk bent forward at the hips for the first week. This is critical.** In order to stay in this position at night, sleep in a recliner chair or put two pillows under your head and two pillows under your knees in bed. You can lay on either side as long as you stay bent at the waist. You may lay flat on your back with your legs elevated like an astronaut to relieve back strain. The idea is to maintain the flexed position and therefore minimize motion at the operative site to prevent problems. Failure to observe these recommendations can result in wound separation or skin loss due to excess tension.
3. After the first 7 days, try to keep movement at your waist to a minimum to prevent fluid collections. This means no twisting or unnecessary up and down motion. Your doctor will advise you when exercise is safe. **The exercise time table:** 1) Stay bent at all times for the first week, 2) No twisting or unnecessary bending after the first week until week three when you can cautiously begin these motions, 3) Walking in the neighborhood after three weeks and non-core exercise after six weeks, 4) gradually increase exercise after three months to full activity as tolerated.
4. If you have drains, empty them before they become half full and recharge the drain bulb by collapsing the bulb. Keep a record of the amount drained.
5. **DO NOT** remove your binder except in the shower. You may adjust it if necessary, but keep snug even pressure on the abdomen.
6. **DO NOT** apply a heating pad or hot water bottle to your abdomen as this may cause a burn to this numb skin. **DO NOT** smoke. This can produce wound healing problems and even skin death.
7. Your doctor will advise you when you can shower, but usually after the first dressing change or about 3–4 days. Showering is best done by first removing all the dressings and the binder. Wearing underpants into the shower and pinning the drain bulbs to the underpants will make showering easier.
8. Hints: Take deep breaths and cough to help clear the lungs from the effects of anesthesia. Move the ankles and knees as often as possible to prevent blood clots in the legs. Eating is essential to provide protein for healing, helps reduce nausea and is the key to feeling better sooner. Don't over medicate and try to sleep through the first week. This is a very bad idea.
9. Call our office with any questions and to schedule your first post-op visit on _____.