

Abdominoplasty Post Operative Instructions

- Your first postoperative appointment will be made for approximately 7 days after surgery. This appointment will have been made for you prior to your procedure and the exact time and date given to you ahead of time.
- You **MUST HAVE AN ADULT DRIVE YOU** home from the facility. You will not be allowed to drive yourself or use public transportation.
- After you return home, you **MUST HAVE A RESPONSIBLE ADULT STAY WITH YOU** a minimum of 24 hours. You **CANNOT** be left alone. The 24 hours begin when you are discharged from the surgery center. Have everything ready at home **PRIOR** to surgery. Make arrangements for someone to stay with you. Let the person or persons know you cannot be left alone. This is important because of the danger of falling and you may lose the concept of time for the day and overmedicate yourself.
- The effects of anesthesia can persist for 72 hours. You must exercise extreme caution before engaging in any activity that could be harmful to yourself or others.
- **DRINK** fluids (water is the best) to help rid the body of the medications used in surgery. Use straws as this will be easier and you will tend to drink more fluids the first few days after surgery.
- Diet may be as tolerated. Eating foods that are bland and soft for the first day or so – foods like after you have had the flu – may be best tolerated. You must eat more than crackers and juice; otherwise you will continue to feel weak and will not heal as well. **REMEMBER** to take the medications with a little something to eat or you will get sick to your stomach. Avoid excessive salt intake, as this can cause fluid retention and increase swelling.
- Upon your return home, light activity is permitted, such as walking, riding in a car, or any activity that is **NOT** strenuous.
- **DO NOT REMAIN IN BED ALL DAY.** Get out of bed for all meals. Although it may be uncomfortable, it is **IMPERATIVE** to take short, light walks around the house at least three times daily starting the day you return home. This will help decrease the formation of blood clots in the legs.
- Do not play sports (i.e. tennis, golf, swimming, running, yoga, dance) or perform heavy house/yard work for 6 weeks after surgery.
- Do not lift anything over 10 pounds for 6 weeks after surgery.

- Avoid lifting or carrying small children, groceries, suitcases or anything else over 10 pounds for 6 weeks.
- Avoid vigorous workouts for 6 weeks after surgery.
- Light cardio activity (i.e. walking moderate distances outside, light treadmill/stationary bike) may be resumed 3 weeks after surgery.
- Your greatest pain and discomfort will occur during the first 2 -3 days after surgery. Take your narcotic pain medication routinely during this time, then taper off according to your pain level.
- Do not take acetaminophen products at the same time as your prescription pain medication, as your prescription pain medication has acetaminophen included in it. You MAY, however, start to alternate extra strength Tylenol and your prescription pain medication, as you wean off the prescription pain medication.
- DO NOT take ibuprofen products (i.e. Advil, Aleve, Motrin) for one month after surgery. If you have post-surgical dressings in place, please keep them intact until told otherwise. Do not remove them until instructed to do so. There may be some bloody drainage on the dressings - this is normal. If you have excessive bleeding or the bandages are too tight, call the office immediately.
- At the time of surgery, you will be placed in a well-fitting compression garment, which should be worn for 24 hours a day (including overnight) for 4 weeks after surgery. Then use it during the day for another 2 weeks after that. The garment may be washed on the gentle cycle and air dry as needed. While this is being done, please stay off of your feet, and minimize activity.
- Drainage tubes are placed underneath the skin at the time of surgery. Prior to leaving the surgery center you will be given explicit instructions on how to care for the drains and on how to monitor the drainage output. You may empty the drains as often as you like; however, we need to know EXACTLY how much comes out of EACH drain on a 24 hour period. BRING YOUR DRAIN RECORD TO YOUR FIRST POSTOPERATIVE VISIT BECAUSE THIS IS THE ONLY WAY DR. BROWN WILL KNOW IF THEY CAN BE REMOVED OR NOT!!!
- Drains are typically removed 7 days after surgery. Some bloody drainage into the bulb reservoir is normal. Excessive drainage, such as more than 100 cc per 8 hour period should be reported to our office.
- You may shower the day after surgery. Wash all incisions gently with soap and water. If you have white tape (steri strips) on your incisions, leave this

intact as it can get wet and normally will not come off in the shower. You may shower with the drains in place. Although the drains are sewn in place, take care to support them so they do not pull and hurt.

- Remove your compression garment prior to showering and replace it when finished.
- Do not soak in a bathtub for 3 weeks after surgery.
- A thin layer of Bacitracin antibiotic ointment should be placed to the belly-button incision twice daily. Do not use NEOSPORIN as it can cause a skin reaction that mimics an infection. The steri strips placed on the remaining incisions will protect them and may be left open to the air after your postsurgical dressing is removed. These incisions do not require any routine care such as the placement of dressings or ointment.
- Do not clean your incisions with Hydrogen Peroxide, because it is toxic to wound healing cells.
- Do not apply hot or warm compresses to any of the surgical areas, because it increases swelling.
- Some itching of the healing wounds is expected, but avoid scratching the incisions.
- The skin sutures are dissolvable and do not need to be removed. The steri strips on your incisions will remain intact for 7 – 10 days.
- It is not uncommon for your genitalia, legs and feet to become swollen and/or bruised after surgery. If it becomes excessive, contact our office.
- You should sleep with your back propped-up with pillows and bent forward at approximately 30 degrees or sleep in a recliner. This will aid in your comfort level. Normal sleeping positions can be resumed 2 – 3 weeks after surgery.
- Driving is permitted 1 – 2 weeks after surgery if you feel well, and are not taking prescription pain medication or sedatives.
- Expect to take at least 7 – 10 days off of work if you are employed.
- It may take up to one month for your normal energy level to return.
- DO NOT travel out of town after surgery unless discussed with the office ahead of time.

- Avoid intercourse for two weeks, and then continue to be careful for the next two weeks.
- NO SMOKING for 6 weeks after surgery.
- Drinking alcoholic beverages may be resumed only after you are off all prescription pain medication.
- After surgery, it is important to have a bowel movement within a day or two. If you do not, you may take over-the-counter laxatives to encourage your bowels to move.
- Do not use a hot tub or sauna for 4 weeks.
- You may use a swimming pool after 3 weeks unless instructed to wait by Dr. Brown, but no swimming for exercise for 6 weeks.
- Do not sit in the sun for 4 weeks. After that, it is extremely important to place sunscreen, minimum of SPF 30, to all scars when outside for a minimum of **1 year** after surgery. Sun exposure can cause permanent discoloration of the scars. Sunlight can even reach scars under a swimsuit or clothing, so take adequate precautions.
- If you experience any generalized itching, rash, wheezing or tightness in the throat, stop taking all medication and call the office immediately, as this may be a sign of a drug allergy.
- Contact the office if you have severe pain not responding to medication, the incisions are showing signs of infection such as redness that spreads away from the incision to the adjacent breast skin and is exquisitely tender or if you develop fever and chills. Fevers that are clinically significant are 101.5 or greater.

Patient Signature: _____ Date: _____

Staff Signature: _____ Date: _____