

Abdominoplasty (Tummy Tuck) Post-Operative Instructions

What are my post-operative instructions?

- Have someone drive you home after surgery and help you at home for 1-2 days.
- Get plenty of rest and follow a balanced diet.
- Constipation is a side effect of decreased activity, use of pain medicines, and dehydration. Be sure to walk, drink fluids regularly, and consider adding raw fruit to your diet. Your doctor may prescribe a stool softener along with the narcotics. Call our office if constipation becomes an issue.
- Do not take aspirin or any products containing aspirin unless approved by your surgeon.
- If you are taking vitamins with iron, resume these as tolerated.
- Do not smoke or be around a smoker. This can be the most significant cause of serious healing issues.

What should my activity level be?

- Start walking as soon as possible - this helps to reduce swelling, lower the chance of developing blood clots and/or pneumonia, and avoid constipation.
- Do not drive until you have full range of motion with your arms, and can stop the car or swerve in an emergency, typically 4 weeks after surgery.
- Avoid lifting anything over 5 pounds for 6 weeks. This can be modified by your physician.
- Resume sexual activity as comfort permits, usually 2-3 weeks postoperatively.
- Avoid straining of abdominal muscles. Strenuous exercise and activities

are restricted for 8 weeks.

- Return to work in 6-8 weeks.

How do I take care of my incision?

- You may shower 48 hours after removal of the drainage tubes.
- Avoid exposing scars to the sun for at least 12 months.
- Always use a strong sunblock, if sun exposure is unavoidable (SPF 30 or greater).
- Keep incisions clean and inspect daily for signs of infection.
- No tub soaking while drains are in place and for 6-8 weeks following surgery.
- Wear your compression garment 24/7 as directed for 6 weeks post op.
- Place soft dressing over incisions and around drain sites daily to wick away moisture and to prevent irritation by garment along the incision line.
- Sleep with head slightly elevated and pillows under your knees to decrease tension on your incision.

How should I expect to feel?

- You may experience temporary soreness, bruising, swelling and tightness in the breasts as well as discomfort in the incision area.
- Most of the higher discomfort will subside after the first few days.
- You will have bruising and swelling of the abdomen. The majority of bruising and swelling will subside in 6-8 weeks.
- You may feel tired for several weeks or months.

What will it look like?

- Your abdomen will feel firmer with a narrower waistline.
- You will walk slightly bent forward and gradually return to normal posture over next 3 weeks.

- Keep steri-strips on. If your incision was closed with skin glue, it will slowly flake off over the first couple of weeks
- Scars will be reddened for 6 months. After that, they will fade and soften.
- The scar will extend from one hipbone to the other, low on the abdomen.

What follow-up care will I receive?

- A follow-up appointment for drain removal will be scheduled when less than 30 ml for 24 hours for 2 consecutive days.

When should I call my doctor?

- If you have increased swelling or bruising.
- If swelling and redness persist for a few days.
- If you have increased redness along the incision.
- If you have severe or increased pain not relieved by medication.
- If you have any side effects to medications; such as, rash, nausea, headache, vomiting or constipation.
- If you have an oral temperature over 100.4 degrees.
- If you have any yellowish or greenish drainage from the incisions or notice a foul odor.
- If you have bleeding from the incisions that is difficult to control with light pressure.
- If you have loss of feeling or motion.

Who should I call if I have questions?

- **Clinic Phone (734) 998-6022**
For questions and prescription refills please contact our clinic at during office hours (Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)
- **Hospital Paging (734) 936-6267**
- After hours and on weekends, call and ask for the Plastic Surgeon on call.

How do I manage my pain?

Pre-operative Instructions:

- Prior to your surgery, pain medication will be prescribed by your Primary care physician or referring physician.
- If you **do not** have an established Primary care physician, please call the Physician referral service at **1-800-211-8181**.
- To establish yourself with a primary care physician **prior** to your surgery, please schedule an appointment with the new primary care physician.

Post-operative Instructions:

- After having surgery, it is expected you will experience some pain even with pain medication. This is a normal part of recovery.
- You will be provided a prescription for pain medicine that will last until your first return post-op visit.
- At your first post-op visit, your pain will be evaluated. The surgical team will manage your pain for the acute recovery phase.
- Acute Pain management for major surgery is typically 6 to 12 weeks.
- Acute pain management for minor procedures is typically 7-10 days.
- You may not drive while you are taking narcotic pain medication or otherwise instructed by your surgical team.

Managing Prescription Refills:

- Please call the clinic at **734-998-6022** for medication refills.
- You may also contact us using the Patient Portal at <https://www.myuofmhealth.org>
- Messages received after hours or on the weekend will be processed the next business day.
- Please allow 24 hours or one business day to have your request reviewed by your surgical team.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by the University of Michigan Health System (UMHS) for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by UMHS and for which UMHS does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Author: Erin Larowe
Reviewers: Lauren Frankel, PA

Patient Education by [University of Michigan Health System](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License](#). Last Revised 5/2016