

Panniculectomy

Post-Operative Instructions

What are my post-operative instructions?

- Depending on the complexity of your surgery, you may need to be admitted to the hospital for a few days.
- Have someone drive you home after surgery and help you at home for 1 week.
- Get plenty of rest and follow balanced diet.
- Decreased activity may promote constipation, so you may want to add more raw fruit to your diet, and be sure to increase fluid intake.
- Do not take aspirin or any products containing aspirin.
- No alcohol for 3 weeks as it causes fluid retention.
- Do not smoke, as smoking delays healing and increases the risk of complications.
- If you are provided with an abdominal binder, wear it as instructed. Do not wear a compression garment unless approved by your physician.

What should my activity level be?

- Turning on your side and pushing off with your arm when getting out of bed will reduce stress on your incision.
- Start walking as soon as possible, as this helps to reduce swelling and lowers the chance of blood clots.
- Do not drive for 3 weeks following surgery or until you have full range of motion in your legs and no discomfort in your abdomen when lifting your legs.
- No lifting greater than 5 lbs. for 6 weeks after surgery.
- Resume sexual activity as comfort permits, usually 2-3 weeks after surgery.

- Avoid straining of abdominal muscles. Strenuous exercise and activities are restricted for 6-8 weeks.
- Return to work in 6-8 weeks.

How do I take care of my incision?

Your surgeon may use staples or sutures to close your incision. You may also have 2 to 4 drains inserted following your surgery.

- You may shower 48 hours after removal of the drainage tubes. Drains may stay in for several weeks.
- Avoid exposing scars to sun for at least 12 months.
- Always use a strong sunblock, if sun exposure is unavoidable (SPF 30 or greater).
- Keep steri-strips on; replace if they come off.
- Keep incisions clean and inspect daily for signs of infection.
- No tub soaking while sutures or drains are in place.
- You can wear soft support underpants for comfort and pad incision with dressings for comfort.
- Sleep with pillow under knees and head elevated on 2 pillows.

How should I expect to feel?

- You may experience temporary pain, soreness, numbness of abdominal skin, incision discomfort.
- Maximum discomfort will occur 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.
- 1 or more of your drains may remain in for several weeks.

What will it look like?

- This procedure only removes the pannus, it does not narrow your

waistline.

- You will walk slightly bent forward and gradually return to normal posture over next 3 weeks.
- Scars will be reddened for 6 months. After that, they will fade and soften.
- The scar will extend from near one hipbone to the other, low on the abdomen.

What follow-up care will I receive?

- Abdominal drains will be removed when output is less than 30 ml for 24 hours for 2 consecutive days.
- Surface stitches removed in 7-10 days but may remain in longer if there is concern of incision separation.

When should I call my doctor?

- If you have increased swelling or bruising.
- If swelling and redness persist after 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.
- 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.

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