

Post Operative Instructions Following- Abdominoplasty (Tummy Tuck)
Juan C. Garcia MD, FACS, PLLC

Call the office at 793-0475 the day after surgery, for your follow up appointment. Normally we like to see you in the office one week post operatively.

- 1.** Someone needs to be available to drive you home and stay with you after surgery.
- 2.** Smoking and second hand smoke interferes with wound healing and can cause tissue death and poor scar formation. Avoiding smoking is in your best interest and strongly recommended.
- 3.** You were placed into an abdominal binder after surgery which needs to be worn continuously for six weeks to minimize swelling and help skin to re-adhere to underlying tissues. When you are able to start showering, the binder can be removed for your shower. Steri-strips are covering the incisions for reinforcement. The steri-strips should be allowed to fall off naturally. Trim any edges that curl.
- 4.** Drains are in place and will be removed when the drainage is minimal. Empty drains twice a day and record the amount of drainage. Please bring this record to your first post op appointment. Drains reduce fluid accumulation and pressure in the abdomen, so it is important that they stay in and are emptied properly. Sponge bathing is recommended while these drains are in place, avoiding the drain openings. 48-72 hours after the drains are removed you may begin to shower. A dry dressing needs to be placed over the drain sites and changed twice a day and when damp.
- 5.** Start walking the day after surgery to reduce any chances of blood clots. Deep breathing several times a day and coughing using a pillow against your abdomen for splinting, will help to expand your lungs after anesthesia. Upright sitting position for longer than 45 minutes the first two weeks after your surgery can enable fluid to accumulate between your muscle and skin, causing a seroma. Make sure to stand up and walk every hour or so, to prevent this from happening.
- 6.** Refrain from any strenuous activities, no running, no jumping, no heavy lifting, no pushing or pulling, no swimming, no tub bathing or hot tubs for six weeks.
- 7.** The incision will be tight, so sleeping at a 45-degree angle will be helpful in the beginning. The length of time you will need to sleep in this position will depend entirely on your personal comfort.
- 8.** Take your antibiotics as prescribed until finished. Take prescribed pain medicine as needed. Narcotic pain medication tend to cause stomach upset, so switching to Aleve or Advil instead of the narcotic as soon as possible will be to your benefit. As you increase your activities, it is normal to be stiff and sore, and the medicine will help.
- 9.** You may drive 36 hours after surgery as long as you are not taking narcotic pain medication and you have full range of motion.

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10. It is normal to experience:

- a. Difficulty in walking erect (for the first few weeks)
- b. Numbness around the abdomen and belly button that can last for several months.
- c. Moderate swelling and puffiness of the abdomen, especially after returning to normal activity.
- d. Shooting pains and tingling in the abdomen (after feeling has started to return in the area).
- e. A slight temperature increase (99.8 degrees or less)
- f. A weight gain for the first few weeks (will be fluid retention and will go away in time)
- g. Some back pain, especially in the beginning, when you can't walk upright due to the abdominal muscles being tight. By the time you are ready to return to work in a week or so, you should be walking normally.

11. Call the doctor at 793-0475 immediately to report any of the following symptoms:

- a. A temperature of 100.4 degrees or more that lasts over 8 hours.
- b. Increased redness or heat in the incision area.
- c. A large amount of swelling in the surgical area after the drains are removed.
- d. Dark places in or around the incision area.
- e. Any purulent drainage or odor from the incisions.

*Always remember- if you have any questions or concerns, please call the office at (518) 793-0475.

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