

Information and Care Instructions for Abdominoplasty Patients

Abdominoplasty (tummy tuck) is a surgical procedure on the abdomen for removing excess skin and fat, tightening the muscles, and eliminating or improving the appearance of scars of the lower abdomen.

Abdominoplasty is **not** a weight-loss technique. Although the procedure removes some fat, it is not a substitute for a healthy diet or sensible exercise.

Length of Operation: Approximately 3 hours.

Hospitalization: Abdominoplasty requires an over-night stay in the hospital. The patient is admitted the morning of surgery and normally discharged the day after surgery. We recommend that you have a friend or relative accompany you when you leave. You will not be allowed to drive.

After Surgery: You will need to remain in bed until the next morning. A urinary catheter will be placed during the operation while you are asleep. This will be removed before leaving the hospital. Swelling and tightness should be expected following surgery. During the first week your clothes may fit tightly. The swelling subsides starting the second week after surgery, but some lower abdominal fullness may persist. You may expect to see about 50% of your total contour improvement at 2 weeks and about 75% at 1 month. It usually takes an additional 2 months for the last bit of swelling to recede.

Pain: You can expect some pain in the incision, but this is alleviated with medication and will gradually subside as you begin to walk. Dr. Woods will give you a pain prescription before you leave the hospital. After 4-6 days, most patients find they can begin converting over to Motrin, Aleve, or Advil for the rest of the postoperative period.

Bandages: Keep the bandages clean and dry. Drainage tubes frequently are left at the surgical site to remove fluid build-up. These need to be emptied 2-3 times a day. Make sure to record the amount of fluid in the bulb! The underlying brown skin tapes should remain on. Allow these brown skin tapes to fall off on their own. These tapes can get wet; just pat them dry with a towel.

Activity: Most people return to their usual activities and to work 2 weeks after the operation. Strenuous sports, pushing, pulling, and heavy lifting are prohibited for 6-8 weeks following surgery.

Smoking: If you smoke, you must stop smoking completely at least two weeks prior to surgery. For optimal wound healing, and an improvement in your overall health, it is best that you never resume smoking.

Do Not remove skin tapes. Let these fall off on their own.

Do Not drive for 5-7 days following surgery.

Do Not lift anything heavier than 5 pounds for 3 weeks following surgery.

Do Not jog, bicycle, lift weights, or play tennis or golf for 6-8 weeks following surgery.

Do Not use aids such as a heating pad, hot water bottle, or ice compresses on the incision.

For questions or problems, please call: **Joseph M. Woods IV, M.D.**
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