

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR ABDOMINOPLASTY (TUMMY TUCK)

### BEFORE SURGERY

- Quit smoking at least 6 weeks prior to surgery as nicotine can impair and delay healing.
- Stop all aspirin containing products, medications that contain blood thinners (Motrin, Advil etc.), Vitamin E and herbal supplements 2 weeks prior to surgery. You can take 1 multivitamin a day.
- Let the doctor know all medications taken daily.
- If you develop an illness right before your surgery, let your surgeon know. A simple cold could cause complications with anesthesia. You may need to postpone your surgery until you feel better.
- If you have your menstrual cycle, please wear a feminine napkin. Do not wear a tampon.
- Shave the entire top part of the pubic area one week before surgery.
- The night before your surgery, you may have a shower with an anti-bacterial soap.
- Arrange for someone to drive you to and from surgery, as well as to stay with you postoperatively to help with activities and daily living, i.e. walking, going to the bathroom.
- You won't be able to do any lifting, housework or reaching in the days following your surgery (that includes picking up your child!), so make sure someone else will be available to help out during your recovery.
- Arrange for some to help take care of your younger children for at least 2 weeks after surgery.
- Arrange for someone to do house work for the first 4-6 weeks.
- Prepare your bed. Ideally, you should try to sleep on the ground level of your home to avoid using the stairs. Get a step stool if your bed is high. Have extra pillows available so that you can sleep at 45 degree angle first 3-4 days (a lazyboy recliner is an easy place to sleep for the first few nights).
- Shower chair to help with your first few showers.
- Long drives are not advisable within the first 48 hours after surgery. If travelling, be sure to take walking breaks every hour to help prevent blood clots.
- Return to work 2-4 weeks.

### THE DAY OF SURGERY

- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight before surgery (including water, gum and candy).
- You may shower and shampoo your hair the night before or morning of your surgery.
- You may brush and rinse your teeth, but do not eat or drink anything.
- Shower and clean the surgical area thoroughly with any antibacterial soap the night before AND the morning of your procedure especially the belly button.
- Do not wear makeup or moisturizers on your face or eyes.
- Remove all nail polish from your fingers, toes (even clear) and acrylic nails. If you have acrylic nails, one nail must be removed. Do not wear perfumes or scented products.

- Do not bring any jewellery or valuables with you on the day of surgery.
- Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothes, preferably button up or zipped up top. Wear flat, comfortable shoes. Remove contact lenses, dentures and nipple rings before surgery.
- Someone must drive you home and stay with you the first night. Please plan your ride to be available at the time you are discharged. This could be early in the morning or late in the afternoon. Please have a ride available on short notice.
- Arrive 2 hours before surgery as instructed during your pre-op appointment.
- Bring your Health Card.

### AFTER SURGERY (POST-OP) INSTRUCTIONS

- Rest allows the body to heal. Sleep with 2 pillows behind your back and 2 pillows under your knees. This takes the pressure off your abdomen. Some patients sleep in a recliner for the first week. You can start to straighten your posture after 5 to 7 day following tummy tuck surgery. Let your body tell you when it is time.
- Don't wear anything tight on your abdomen. Tight clothing can hinder proper healing and cause lines.
- Follow balanced diet. You should start with a clear liquid diet, such as soup and crackers and drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of water or other non-alcoholic fluids a day. Progress slowly to your regular diet. This helps prevent nausea and vomiting.
- Decreased activity may promote constipation, so you may want to add more raw fruit to your diet.
- Take pain medication as prescribed. Do not take aspirin or any products containing aspirin until approved by your physician.
- Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medications.
- If you are taking vitamins with iron, resume these as tolerated.
- Do not smoke, as smoking delays healing and increases the risk of complications.
- Start walking as soon as possible as this helps to reduce swelling and lowers the chance of blood clots.
- Do not drive until you are no longer taking any pain medications (narcotics).
- Do not drive until you have full range of motion with your arms.
- No lifting greater than 5 lbs for 6 weeks. Avoid straining of abdominal muscles. Strenuous exercise and activities are restricted for 6 weeks.
- Resume sexual activity as comfort permits, usually 2-3 weeks postoperatively.
- Return to work in 2-4 weeks.

## THE JACSON PRATT DRAINAGE TUBE(S)

A drainage tube has been inserted to help remove excess fluid from the surgical site in order to aid healing. The following are some instructions to follow while caring for the drainage tube at home.

- The reservoir attached to the end of the tube must be emptied as often as necessary, and all drainage that is emptied must be measured (a measuring cup will be provided for you to take home).
- To empty the reservoir, pull the plug from the opening and squeeze the bulb gently and carefully. Pour contents into the measuring cup. Before replacing the plug, squeeze the reservoir to create suction (the reservoir should appear sucked in and not round after being closed).
- Each time the reservoir is emptied, record the amount, time and date on the form. This will help you keep track of how much the tube is draining within a 24 hour period. You may need to give this information to your doctor. If more than one drainage system, keep a separate record for each drain.
- Protect the tube from being pulled or pressed, and protect from the outside environment. Generally the tube is sutured in place and the exit site covered with a clean surgical dressing. Keep the area of skin around the tube clean and avoid wetting the dressing.

## INCISION CARE

- You may shower 48 hours after removal of all drainage tubes.
- Avoid exposing scars to sun for at least 12 months (1 year).
- Always use a strong sun block, if sun exposure is unavoidable (SPF 30 or greater).
- Keep steri-strips (tapes) on for 2-4 weeks. They should be changed or removed if becoming oozy from underneath or if you see yellow or green discharge. Remove if any rash develops. otherwise they will help with the scar.
- Keep incisions clean and inspect daily for signs of infection.
- No tub soaking while sutures or drains are in place.
- Wear your compression garment (binder) 24/7 for 6 weeks post op.
- Place daily soft dressing over incision and around drain sites to remove 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.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

- 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 will feel tired for several weeks or months.

## APPEARANCE

- Flatter, firmer abdomen.
- You will walk slightly bent forward and gradually return to normal posture over the 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.
- Waistline may not be narrower. You may experience temporary pain, soreness, numbness of abdominal skin, incision discomfort.

## FOLLOW-UP CARE

- When the measurement of drainage is less than 30 ml (per tube) in 24 hours, the drainage tube may be removed by a health professional (unless indicated differently by your doctor).
- Specific instructions regarding where and when to have the tube(s) removed will be provided to you before you leave the hospital.

## WHEN TO CALL

You should feel better each day after your operation. The following may indicate infection:

- If you have increased swelling or bruising.
- If swelling and redness persist surrounding the tube after a few days.
- If you have a large increase in drainage from the reservoir.
- 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° F or 38.5° C.
- If you have any drainage soaked dressing and yellowish or greenish drainage from the incisions or notice a foul odour.
- If you have bleeding from the incisions that is difficult to control with light pressure.
- If you have loss of feeling or motion.