



Abdominoplasty Surgery

Post-Operative Instructions

The following instructions will provide helpful information and guide you through your recovery. These are designed to be general guidelines. Remember, everyone recovers differently.

What to expect:

- Maximum discomfort will occur the first few days after surgery and then will subside gradually.
- The abdomen may be sore and you might experience a burning sensation, which is normal and will subside with time.
- You will be sent home with drains, which will be removed at a later date in the clinic.
- Nausea can occur following any surgical procedure and generally passes by the first postoperative day.
- You may experience some difficulty standing up straight for the first week or two after surgery. Please do not make any special attempts to stretch or stand up straight during the first three weeks of healing. The tightness will gradually soften as you heal and progressively use your body muscles.
- Compression Wear (abdominal binder) must be worn **all day and night** for about 4-6 weeks after surgery. The binder is washable but DO NOT dry it in the dryer. Air dry the binder so it doesn't shrink.
- It is generally best to plan to take seven to ten days off before returning to work. If your job is physical, it is not unreasonable to take some extra time.

Pain Medication:

- **Take pain medication as prescribed.**
- **For pain that is less intense it would be appropriate to take Tylenol 500 mg two tablets every 6 hours (not to exceed 2000 mg in 24 hours) and Ibuprofen 600 mg every six hours, if it is not contraindicated for your health and you have not been prescribed Celebrex.**

Diet:

- Follow a balanced diet. Decreased activity may promote constipation, so you may want to add more raw fruit to your diet and be sure to increase your fluid intake.
- You may not feel very hungry for one to three days following the surgery. You should consume easily digested food for the first twenty-four hours (ex. toast, crackers, soup, bananas, rice, and applesauce).
- Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medications.

Activities:

- Have someone drive you home after surgery and help you at home for 1-2 days.
- Listen to your body and rest when you are tired.
- Begin walking as soon as possible. Doing so will reduce swelling, prevent post-operative complications, and promote recovery.



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- Do not drive until you are no longer taking the prescribed pain medications and you have full range of motion with your arms (approximately 7-10 days).
- Refrain from vigorous activity for 2-6 weeks. Increase activity gradually as tolerated.
- Avoid lifting anything over 5 pounds for 2-3 weeks.
- Do not smoke **any substance**, as doing so delays healing and increases the risk of complications.

Wound care:

- No showering until your drains are removed and do not submerge your incision (example- bathtub, hot tub, swimming) until cleared by Dr. Holland.
- Your incision may be taped with steri-strips. Leave these in place until they fall off themselves. You can expect some drainage onto the steri-strips.
- Keep incisions clean and inspect daily for redness, swelling, heat, and or drainage with an odor.
- If your skin is dry after surgery, you may apply a moisturizer, but be sure to keep the suture area dry.
- Avoid exposing scars to sun for at least 12 months and always use a strong sunblock (SPF 30) if sun exposure is unavoidable.

Drain Care:

- Drains are sutured in place and should be protected from tugging and pulling.
- Drainage should be measured and discarded every 12 hours, more frequently if needed. It is important you keep accurate records of drainage amounts.
- Should the drainage become foul smelling or cloudy, please contact the office.
- If the dressing around the tube becomes saturated it may need to be changed. Gauze may be folded in half and placed under the drain tube and above the drain tube. Then cover with a gauze on top, and tape in place.

Call Dr. Holland if:

- Your temperature is greater than 101. It is not uncommon to have a low-grade fever after surgery.
- You have increased swelling and/or bruising.
- You have increased redness around the incision and/or if pus (yellowish or greenish drainage with a foul odor) drains from the incision.
- Severe or increased pain not relieved by medication occurs.
- You have side effects such as rash, nausea, headache and or vomiting from the medication.
- Severe bleeding occurs. Apply direct pressure to the area.
- You have a loss of feeling or motion.

Follow up:

- Please make your follow-up appointment by calling the office or as instructed by Dr. Holland. If you have any problems before then, do not hesitate to call 207-835-4777 for assistance. **After hours, please call the office and press 7 when prompted to reach Dr. Holland directly.**