

Lowcountry Plastic Surgery Center

ABDOMINOPLASTY INSTRUCTIONS

1. DO NOT TAKE ANY ASPIRIN PRODUCTS OR IBUPROFEN for two weeks prior to or after surgery. Aspirin thins the blood, causing you to bleed and bruise more. You may take Tylenol.
2. You may rinse and brush your teeth but **do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your surgery.**
3. You will need someone to drive you home after the surgery and help you at home for 1-2 days so please make any necessary arrangements ahead of time.
4. You will receive a prescription for pain medication. Call the office at 971-2860 if you notice any nausea, itching, headaches, or rashes. Take medications with food.
5. Call our office if you notice **excessive** swelling, bleeding or soreness.
6. Elevate both the head of the bed and the knees with two to three pillows. This will relieve tension on the suture line.
7. You may start walking as soon as possible, and should definitely be walking within 24 hours of surgery. This helps to reduce swelling and lowers the chance of blood clots in the legs.
8. Walk in a bent-over position with your shoulders leaning forward. This will prevent excessive tension on the suture line. By the end of the second or third week post-operatively the patient should be able to stand up straight.
9. The nurse will give you instructions concerning emptying your drains. Be sure to empty drains and record output (in milliliters or cc's) twice daily. Bring the recorded output with you to your first post-operative office visit. Dr. Hensel will need to know the output from drains before he can remove them.
10. You may shower after surgery. Wash with soap and water and pat dry with clean towel. No soaking in the tub or swimming while sutures and drains are in place.
11. You may drink liquids when you arrive home. By evening you may have a light meal.
12. Do not drink any alcoholic beverages for 48 hours. They do not mix with anesthesia and may make you very sick.
13. Do not smoke for 4 weeks after surgery. If you are a smoker you should clearly understand that nicotine could impair and delay healing.
14. Do not drive until you are no longer on pain medications or until you have full range of movement with your arms.
15. Do not use a heating pad or hot water bottle on the abdomen or back. You will have a loss of sensation and it will be easy to obtain a skin burn.
16. Avoid exposing scars to sun for at least 12 months. If sun exposure is unavoidable, always use a strong sun block (SPF 30 or greater)
17. No lifting greater than 10-12 pounds for first 2 weeks. No lifting greater than 20-25 pounds for the next 2 weeks.

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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 3-4 weeks.
- You may feel tired for several weeks or months.

APPEARANCE

- Flatter, firmer abdomen with narrower waistline
- You will walk slightly bent forward and gradually return to the normal posture over next three weeks.
- Scars will be reddened for six months. After that, they will fade and soften.

FOLLOW UP CARE

- Abdominal drains removed when less than 30 ml daily for at least two days in a row
- All stitches are absorbable
- Wear abdominal binder 24 hours a day for four weeks, then 12 hours daily for the next two weeks.

Times when you may remove binder

- To shower
- To wash binder
- Very short periods of time while at rest