

POST-SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS: ABDOMINOPLASTY

Once your surgery is completed, you must follow all the instructions given to you in order to heal properly and have a good outcome. Use this as a checklist of progress as you heal. Included are normal post-surgical experiences and key health considerations that may be a cause of concern.

NORMAL POST-OPERATIVE SYMPTOMS

Normal symptoms of abdominoplasty and signs to watch for following tummy tuck surgery include the following:

Tightness and stiffness in abdomen: Bruising, swelling and redness: Tingling, burning or intermittent shooting pain: These are normal experiences as the skin, tissues and sensory nerves heal. Pain medication and muscle relaxants will help you cope with any discomfort. If you have drains, you may experience additional localized discomfort. **Consistent sharp pain should be reported to Dr. Tanna immediately.**

Skin firmness, hypersensitivity or lack of sensitivity: This is normal and will gradually resolve over time.

Shiny skin or any itchy feeling: Swelling can cause the skin in treated areas to appear shiny. As the healing process advances, you may also find a mild to severe itchy feeling. An antihistamine like Benadryl can help to alleviate severe, constant itchiness. **If the skin becomes red and hot to the touch, contact our office immediately.**

Asymmetry: both sides of your body heal differently: One side of your body may look or feel quite different from the other in the days following surgery. This is expected. However, extreme asymmetry should be reported to Dr. Tanna immediately.

CALL THE OFFICE IMMEDIATELY IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- **A high fever, (over 101°) severe nausea and vomiting, continued dizziness or incoherent behavior, such as hallucinations.**
- **Any pain that cannot be controlled by your pain medication.**
- **Bright red skin that is hot to the touch.**
- **Excessive bleeding or fluid seeping through the incisions.**
- **A severely misshapen region anywhere on your abdomen or bruising that is localized to one specific point of the abdomen.**
- **Shortness of breath, or calf pain.**

To alleviate any discomfort, and to reduce swelling, you may apply cool, not cold compresses to the treated region. Crushed ice or ice packs must be wrapped in a towel before being applied to the skin. Do not apply ice or anything frozen directly to the skin. Apply cool compresses, for no longer than 20-minute intervals.

POST-SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS

Whether you are released on the same day as the surgery or after an overnight stay in the hospital, you will only be released to the care of a responsible adult. All of these instructions must be clear to the adult who will monitor your health and support you around the clock in the first 24 hours following surgery.

NO SMOKING

- **Do not smoke.** Smoking can greatly impair your safety prior to surgery and your ability to heal following surgery. You must not smoke.

DRESSINGS

- **Keep dressings clean and dry.** Your incisions will seep fluid and some blood for a short time after surgery. Do not remove any steri-strips over your stitches. You can replace any compressions garments over the gauze. If you have a drain placed in your incisions, carefully follow the instructions for drain care and record the amount of drained fluid. It is okay to shower with drains in place. It is also okay for the shower water to come in contact with your incision sites.
- **Wear your compression garment around the clock.** Remove the compression garment only when showering.

SHOWERING

- **Do not shower until 48 hours after surgery.** During this time, keep the compression garment on. Two days (48 hours) after surgery, you may remove the garment. Any gauze or dressings that fall away from the incision can be thrown away. After the shower, replace the compression garment. There will be surgical glue and tape placed over your stitches. Do not remove this.
- **Take a warm, not hot shower.** Do not take a bath. Do not rub your incisions. It is okay to pat or air dry your incisions after surgery. Apply a fragrance free moisturizer to the surrounding skin, but not on your incisions.

SLEEPING

- **Recline, do not lie down.** This will be more comfortable for you, and can reduce swelling. Always keep your head elevated. Do not bend forward or over. Sleep with a few pillows or in a recliner to maintain a flexed position.

ACTIVITY

- **Do not stand fully upright:** Standing upright could greatly affect your results and could cause serious injury. Within 1-2 weeks after surgery, you will be able to stand upright again. You may slowly begin to stand taller each day as the tummy region continues to heal.
- **Rest, but not bed rest.** While rest is important in the early stages of healing, equally important is that you are ambulatory, meaning that you are walking under your own strength. If you are drinking plenty of water you will be walking to the bathroom. This will be enough activity.
- **Do not resume any exercise other than regular walking.** Refrain from weight-bearing or abdominal crunching exercises. Walking is essential every day to prevent the formation of blood clots. However, with appropriate hydration, this should be easily achieved.
- **Relax.** Do not engage in any stressful activities. Do not lift, push or pull anything. Take care of no one, and let others tend to you.

MEDICATIONS

- **Take all medication, exactly as prescribed.** This includes oral pain medication and muscle relaxants. For less severe pain, it is okay to use over-the-counter medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin/Advil).

NUTRITION

- **Maintain a healthy diet and good nutrition.** Fluids are critical following surgery. Stick to non-carbonated, non-alcoholic, caffeine-free and green tea-free beverages including fruit juices and water, milk and yogurt drinks. You must consume at least 8 ounces of fluid every 2 hours. Stick with soft, bland, nutritious food for the first 24 hours. Constipation is expected after surgery and can last for days.

AFTER-SURGERY CARE

- **Dr. Tanna will inform you when to start scar massage, lymphatic drainage, and massage therapy.** This can help soften any firmness or contour irregularities. This is usually started 2-6 weeks after surgery.
- **The office will contact you to schedule your first post-operative visit with Dr. Tanna.**