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**DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER AN ABDOMINOPLASTY**

- You may shower after your drain comes out, or 48 hours post-op if you do not have a drain. The stitches can get wet; just pat them dry. Do not soak in a tub for six weeks or until you are completely healed.
- You can do upper body exercises or walking any time that you feel up to it, and I strongly encourage you to walk every day. You can rest afterwards, but walking will keep you from losing muscle mass, prevent clots in your legs and bring your energy level back sooner. You should not do any kind of sit-ups for eight weeks after surgery to make sure that the healing is complete, and NO strenuous exercise for two weeks after surgery, or you may bleed.
- You will wear your compression garment for about one month after surgery, and it should be worn at night as well. This helps with the swelling and discomfort.
- After surgery, you may initially feel as if you can't stand up straight, and that is possibly true! This is just a response to the tightness of the closure and is completely normal, but please try to stand as straight as you can as soon as you can to avoid muscle spasms in your back. Doing "snow angels" against a wall will help you.
- Please do not take your medication on an empty stomach as this can cause dizziness and nausea. In addition to this, be aware that all pain medication can cause constipation. You may take any over-the-counter remedies like Colace or laxatives you like for this problem.
- Please avoid ASPIRIN substances or any of the medications listed on your pre-op sheet for two weeks after your surgery as this will increase your risk of bruising and poor healing.
- You may drive when you are no longer taking pain medication and feel comfortable enough to do so.
- If you have steri-strips, please leave these on until they are dangling by a thread.
- You may find when you get home that you will have gained weight and feel bloated after surgery. This is simply from IV fluid and will resolve in about two weeks.

- For three to six weeks post-op, it is normal for the abdomen to be puffed and swollen.
- Some patients experience a brief period of ‘let-down’ or depression after cosmetic surgery. Some may subconsciously have expected to feel and look better “instantly,” even though they rationally understand that this will not be the case. Patients commonly question their decision to have surgery during the first few days after surgery. As the healing occurs, these thoughts usually disappear quickly. If you feel depressed, understanding that this is a “natural” phase of the healing process may help you to cope with this emotional state.
- Please don’t apply any creams or lotions on your incisions until advised by the doctor.
- Please avoid using a heating pad near the incision, as blistering may occur.
- The use of over-the-counter laxatives or stool softeners (Colace) is recommended post-op while taking prescriptive pain medicines.
- **SMOKING DRAMATICALLY INCREASES YOUR RISK OF INFECTION, POOR HEALING AND BAD SCARRING. PLEASE REFRAIN FROM SMOKING FOR ONE MONTH PRIOR TO SURGERY AND AT LEAST ONE MONTH POST-OP OR UNTIL YOU ARE COMPLETELY HEALED.**

PLEASE FEEL COMFORTABLE TO CALL OUR OFFICE IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS OR QUESTIONS. AFTER HOURS OR ON WEEKENDS, YOU CAN REACH THE DOCTOR BY CALLING (804) 320-8545. **IN A TRUE EMERGENCY, CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.**