

K. Cary Canoun MD, FACS

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ABDOMINOPLASTY POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS

1. You must have a responsible adult drive you home after surgery. Because abdominoplasty is a major operation done on an outpatient basis, it is very important that you have a responsible person available to assist you for the first several days after surgery. **It is mandatory that you have someone stay with you for at least the first 24 hours after surgery.**
2. A light diet is best for the day following surgery. Start with fluids and progress to foods slowly. Drink plenty of fluids.
3. You may go to the bathroom with assistance as needed. Rest for the first 24 hours but move your legs around frequently. Take it easy and do not do any lifting or strenuous exercise for 6 weeks after surgery. Do not drive until you are no longer taking your pain medication and have good lower body coordination, about 7-10 days for most people. You will have to take sponge baths for the first week after surgery.
4. Medications will be prescribed the day of surgery. You will be given pain medication and an antibiotic. Take medications according to the instructions. If the pain medications make you drowsy, have someone give you the medications at the proper intervals. This will avoid you taking them too often. Pain medications can cause constipation. If you feel you are getting constipated, take a gentle laxative or stool softener.
5. The period of greatest discomfort does not usually last more than 48-72 hours. Thereafter, you may find you need your pain medication less frequently. It is normal to have some pulling and pinching sensations for weeks and sometimes months following surgery. The surgical scar may become hard and feel numb. This is scar tissue and part of the healing process.
6. When sitting, you should flex at the waist. You should sleep with your back flexed for the first two weeks. A reclining chair or sleeping with several pillows to keep flexed works well for this. When you are sitting, get up and move around every 30 minutes.
7. You will be fitted with an abdominal binder at the end of your surgery. This binder should always remain in place over the lower abdomen. If it moves, you can remove it briefly to reposition the binder.
8. Drains will be placed to remove the fluid that is expected to accumulate following this type of surgery. You must empty the drain every 12 hours and record the output for each drain. After you empty the drain, you need to squeeze the bulb container flat prior to closing the drain. This will keep suction on the drain. You will need to keep the drain wound clean and covered. The drains are usually removed 1-2 weeks following surgery. Do not pull on the drains.

You can expect the following:

1. Moderate discomfort – use pain medication as prescribed. No Aspirin or Motrin.
2. Moderate swelling of the lower abdomen and groin area.

Call me if you have any of the following:

1. Severe pain not responding to the pain medication.
2. Marked swelling or more swelling on one side than the other.
3. Any other questions or concerns.

Follow-Up Office Visits:

We will call you the day following surgery.

2nd Visit: 6 days after surgery.

3rd Visit 2-4 weeks after surgery.

First Post-op Visit: Date _____ Time _____

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