



ABDOMINOPLASTY (TUMMY TUCK)

AFTER YOUR SURGERY

- You will likely feel drowsy upon waking up from anesthesia.
- You may have a sore throat.
- You will see/feel swelling and bruising of your abdomen. You will experience a “tight” sensation. You will need to walk and rest with your abdomen flexed (or bent) initially.
- Usually, temporary loss of sensation of the skin of your abdomen.
- Moderate discomfort.
- Possibly minor stinging when you urinate for the first time after surgery. This is due to the urinary catheter you will have in place during surgery.
- You will have a big bulky dressing covering your abdominal wall. This dressing is accompanied by a compression binder. You may adjust the compression binder as needed if it slides up/down and becomes uncomfortable. Do NOT remove the compression binder or your dressings.
- Wear your compression binder day and night until instructed otherwise.
- Rest, yet keep moving. Rest is important, although it is equally important to walk inside for 5-10 minutes every couple of hours while awake.
- It’s important to walk with your abdomen flexed (bent) and rest with pillows behind your back and under your knees.
- Take the medication, as directed, to address any discomfort. The period of greatest discomfort does not usually last more than 24-48 hours.
- Your pain medication may constipate you. Be sure to take in plenty of good fluids such as water, broth, or sports drinks. Milk of magnesia can be purchased from the local drug store to help with constipation.
- No alcohol.
- No lifting over 10 pounds, no pushing/pulling, do not allow your heart rate above 90 bpm.
- You may not shower until after your postoperative visit approximately 5 days after surgery. You may sponge bathe as needed.
- Inject your first Lovenox shot 6 hours after surgery. Inject one shot every 24 hours for the nine days following surgery.
- NO smoking. Avoid being around those who are smoking.

CALL THE OFFICE IF EXPERIENCING

- Pain not controlled by the prescribed medication.
- Excessive or sudden swelling on one side.
- Temperature higher than 101 degrees F.
- Severe nausea and vomiting.
- Pain in calf, knee, groin, or shortness of breath.
- Continuous dizziness or unusual behavior.

2 TO 7 DAYS FOLLOWING SURGERY

- During this time, you can expect to slowly progress day by day.
- Please be sure to speak with Dr. Shell before you begin to drive or return to work or a regular routine at home.
- Continue a well-balanced diet with adequate hydration.
- Advice exposure to sun and heat.
- Continue to take prescribed pain medications as needed.
- Begin to transition from prescribed pain medication to over-the-counter alternative. Dr. Shell and staff can guide you through this as needed.
- Keep wearing provided abdominal binder day and night.
- Continue keeping your abdomen flexed (bent) while walking and resting. You will be able to stand a bit more upright each day.
- Avoid exercise other than walking. Leisurely daily walks will help you feel better and prevent blood clots.
- Make sure to get up and move for about 10-15 of every 60 minutes while awake.
- NO smoking. Avoid being around those who are smoking.

1 TO 4 WEEKS FOLLOWING SURGERY

- Healing is a gradual process. It is normal to feel discouraged while waiting for swelling, bruising, discomfort, and numbness to diminish. Extra rest, a nutritious diet, and avoidance of stress are important aids to recovery. Once cleared by Dr. Shell, you may take Aspirin, Advil, Aleve, etc. at this time.
- Wash incision with Dial antibacterial soap and pat dry with clean cloth.
- The small strips of tape covering your incision will fall off 2-3 weeks after surgery.
- Keep wearing your abdominal binder day and night.
- Once cleared by Dr. Shell, you may ease back into your workout routine.
- Continue to avoid sun exposure and heat. Use sunscreen on incision as it may tend to hyperpigment.
- NO smoking. Avoid being around those who are smoking.

4 TO 6 WEEKS FOLLOWING SURGERY

- Overall swelling continues to subside, and you will begin to settle into your natural appearance. Tenderness, tightness, skin numbness, or bruising (if remaining) will continue to diminish.
- You may submerge your body in water, following complete healing of your incisions.
- You may stop wearing your abdominal binder.

THE FIRST YEAR

- Continued refinements in the appearance of your abdomen may take up to one full year.
- Appearances continue to change with age. Just as other areas of your body may change with age, so can your abdomen.
- Avoid direct sun exposure to scars the first year.
- Call our office if you notice a stitch coming up like a bristle brush along your scar. If the area around the stitch looks red and irritated, you may need antibiotics.
- Call our office if your scar becomes raised and/or ropy.