

**POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR ABDOMINOPLASTY**

Our goal is for you to achieve the best possible result from your surgery. This requires participation from both you and our staff during the postoperative period. You should be familiar with these instructions in order to make the postoperative course a smooth one. We are happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have regarding your postoperative care.

- **POSITION:** Because abdominoplasty involves removal of the extra abdominal skin and tightening of the abdominal muscles, you will experience some difficulty standing up straight for about 10 days to two weeks or even longer. When you are lying down or sleeping in bed, you will need to have your body in a slightly flexed position bending at the waist. You may find it more comfortable placing a pillow or two under your knees. This tightness will gradually disappear as you heal and progressively use your body muscles for the activities of daily living. Please do not make any attempts to stretch or pull the abdomen straight during the first 2-3 weeks of healing.
- **DRESSINGS:** You will see a shiny, clear “band aid” (Dermabond skin glue) over the incision line. You may wash over it. Pat it dry. Do not apply any creams, lotions, or ointments over your incision line. You may reinforce any gauze dressings as necessary. You should begin to remove the glue at day 14-18. You may do this by lightly rubbing the area with Vaseline Petroleum Jelly.
- **WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR:** If any signs of infection such as an area of redness, oral temperature over 101F, foul smelling drainage, or pain which is not relieved with medication, then you must call immediately to be evaluated. Dr. Peters’ office number is **(985) 223-2602**. After 5 PM, weekends, and holidays, your call will be transferred to our answering service.
- **GARMENT:** You’ll be given your compression garment once the drains are removed from the abdomen.
- **DRAINS:** There are usually two drains placed in the abdomen during surgery. They are sutured in place. These drains evacuate any fluid which may accumulate under the skin. The collected fluid empties into a bulb which will need to be emptied two to three times per day. You need to record the amount collected and bring this record to each visit so that he may determine when to safely remove the drains. The drains are usually removed 5-10 days after surgery. You may not shower while the drains are in place. You may shower 1 day after the drains are removed.
- **ACTIVITY:** Tummy tucks are one of the most uncomfortable operations we do as plastic surgeons. Most of the discomfort is during the first 2 weeks following surgery. You will not begin to feel “back to normal” for about 3-4 weeks. You may begin to go on leisurely walks after 2 weeks. **DO NOT OVER DO IT.** Too much activity will prolong the healing time.
- **STITCHES:** You will have stitches on your belly button which will be removed at about 10-14 days. The remaining sutures are absorbable and will dissolve on their own.
- **SMOKING:** We advise that you do not use any tobacco products for at least 14 days following your surgery.

## Mark H. Peters, MD, FACS

---

- **ALCOHOL:** Alcohol dilates the blood vessels and may increase the chance of post-operative bleeding. It also contributes to dehydration. Please do not drink until you have stopped taking the prescription pain pills as this combination can be dangerous.
- **DRIVING:** Please do not drive for at least 10 days following the surgery. You should not drive while taking any prescription pain medication.
- **EXPOSURE TO SUNLIGHT:** It is recommended that you protect the incision lines from the sun for at least one year following surgery. Even with a bathing suit, sunlight can still reach the skin so application of sun screen is recommended
- **ITCHING:** Benadryl (over the counter): 25-50 mg every 6 hours.
- **GAS:** (caused by pain medication): Phazyme gel tabs.
- **CONSTIPATION:** (Caused by pain medication): Fruit juices, eat canned fruit, Colace or Senecot stool softeners.
- **FEVER:** (without chills or body aches and less than 100 degrees): Two Tylenol every four hours. Look carefully at the incisions for any possible signs of infection.
- **POSTOPERATIVE APPOINTMENTS:** It is very important that you follow the scheduled appointments we establish for you after surgery.

You may continue to use your prescribed narcotic medication as directed. Please ask Dr. Peters prior to initiating any other medications such as Ibuprofen or Vitamin E.

I have reviewed the postoperative care instructions with \_\_\_\_\_; I understand these instructions and a copy has been provided to me.

Patient \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_