



Cosmetic Plastic
Surgery Institute

Tummy Tuck Postop Instructions

1. **Dressing:** An abdominal binder which acts as a compression garment will be used to minimize swelling postoperatively and to protect your abdominal wall/muscle plication sutures from popping. You will be required to wear this binder for approximately 4 to 6 weeks, the time required for the abdominal wall to fuse in its plicated state. Additionally, you will have a cotton ball moistened with Bacitracin, which you will have to replace daily starting one week following surgery.
2. **Sutures:** The majority of your abdominal sutures will be internal and self absorb. Instead, you will notice a white tape, i.e. Steri-Strips, which will cover your incision line and act like an external stitch. These Steri-Strips will be maintained for six weeks until the incision line has attained 80% of its strength. Often, the suture line for the umbilicus will contain external sutures, which will be kept in place for approximately 10 to 12 days.
3. **Drains:** You will find two large drain tubes with bulb capsules secured to your abdominal binder. These drains serve to remove extraneous fluid accumulation in the surgically dissected areas, thus avoiding a hematoma (most common complication following tummy tuck surgery). Drains are usually removed between week 1 to 2 when their output clears up and is less than 25ccs for 24-hour period.
4. **Showering:** You may sponge bathe only until your drains have been removed. Because of decreased sensation over the abdominal region, use luke warm water when showering to prevent a burn. You may let the water run over your incision sites but do not wipe/scrub over them.
5. **Position:** Resting with your head elevated and knees bent will help decrease tension on the surgical incision line and result in improved over all incision appearance. Use of 2 to 3 pillows under your head and a pillow under the knees while sleeping will suffice. If you are a restless sleeper, you may want to sleep in a Lazy Boy chair. Additionally, you should walk with a semi-flexed posture in order to minimize tension on your incision line.
6. **Activity:** You may be up and around the house as soon as you feel comfortable. Do not do anything that requires straining or bending over for at least 10 to 14 days (Do not bend over to put on your shoes or to tie your shoe laces). You may return to work as soon as you feel comfortable doing so (3 to 4 weeks following surgery). You must avoid all strenuous activities and exercise for the first four weeks following surgery.
7. **Driving:** Do not drive while taking prescription pain medicines. Most patients will stop taking pain medications between week 1 and 2 following surgery.
8. **Exposure to sunlight:** Protect your scars from sun exposure for at least 6 months after surgery. Also, avoid sun tanning for the first six months following surgery. Remember to wear sunscreen with a skin-protection factor (SPF) of at least 20 whenever you go outside.



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9. Loss of sensation: The entire abdominal area that has been elevated will be numb for 3 to 6 months following surgery. As the sensory nerves regenerate, patients normally experience tingling, shooting sensations, or itching. Massage usually relieves these symptoms.

10. Exercise: Do not do any heavy activities or aerobic exercise for at least 4 weeks after surgery. Strenuous activities may cause bleeding and swelling for longer periods than you realize.

11. Postoperative Visits: Your doctor will ask you to return to the office usually within one week to ensure that your abdominal skin is not compromised. You will then return to your doctor's office within one to two weeks for removal of drains and removal of umbilical sutures. Your next appointment will be at 4 to 6 weeks after which you will be allowed to return to routine and full physical activity.

Pt. Name _____

Pt. Signature _____

Date _____