

## Abdominoplasty Post Operative Care

### Post Operative Medication

1. Please take the medications as directed. Antibiotics are taken until all of the pills are finished. Pain and muscle relaxant medication are taken as needed. Never take medication on an empty stomach and always space the medications appropriately.
2. You may NOT drive while taking the pain or muscle relaxant medications.
3. Constipation is very common due to the pain medication and anesthesia. Please use Colace (over the counter) or any stool softener that has worked with you in the past.
4. Advil, or any other type of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication is not recommended for the first 5 days after surgery.
5. DO NOT take your prescribed pain medication with any other type of pain medication at the same time.

### Post Operative Binder

1. The compression binder is to be worn for 6 weeks post surgery (unless otherwise directed).
2. Please do not remove binder after the surgery. The office staff will help you remove the garment on your first post-op visit. The binder may need to be adjusted at home to prevent excess pressure on the drains. You will need to monitor this at home.
3. If you choose to wash your garment, please hand wash or machine wash on the delicate cycle and hang to dry. We will give you a second garment at your post-op visit.
4. Please wear your compression garment day and night for 6 weeks and only remove it when necessary (unless otherwise instructed).
5. If the binder is causing irritation to the skin, a tight fitting top may be worn against the skin, with the binder going on overtop to prevent friction.

### Post Operative Dressing & Incisions

1. If dressings are in place please leave them intact until office staff removes them.
2. It's normal to have some drainage or seepage from the incision line during the healing period.
3. If staples are in place, your nurse will remove them when they are ready, usually on post op day 5. Once the staples are out, dressings over the incisions aren't necessary.
4. Steri-strips will be in place over the incisions. Do not remove them unless otherwise instructed. These should be allowed to peel off on their own. Edges that are lifting may be trimmed with clean scissors.
5. You may start applying scar creams to the incisions after 3 weeks if the incision line is well

approximated and there are no open wounds or scabs.

6. After 7-10 days, your nurse will remove the sutures around your belly button area.
7. Incision lines and final results may take up to about a year. Sometimes sutures take time to dissolve, and sometimes they may reach the surface of your skin. This is normal and you may gently trim them.
8. Please call the office if you have excessive pain, excessive bleeding, notice signs of infection or have a rise in temperature above 100°F/37.5°C.

### Post Operative Drains

1. You will have two drainage tubes in place after your surgery.
2. Please empty these drains every 12 hours (twice in a 24hr period) unless more frequent emptying is required (we recommend 9am and 9pm).
3. Record the output in mLs so that a 24-hour total can be determined by your nurse for each drain.
4. Your RN may remove a drain if the output is less than 30mLs in a 24-hour period. This will be discussed at your post-op checks.
5. When readjusting your binder, please note if the drain tubing is causing a depression in the skin on the abdomen. Tubing needs to be moved around to ensure it doesn't cause skin damage if left in the same place for too long.
6. Please ensure suction (ie. Squeeze the bulb before replacing the cap) is applied to the bulb to ensure proper drainage.
7. If a clot is interfering with proper drainage please call the office or gently milk the tubing until the clot moves into the bulb.
8. When a drain is removed, you will have a dressing in place over the drain insertion site. Please try to keep this on for 24 hours. If your 2<sup>nd</sup> drain is removed then you may shower **24 hours** from the time the last drain was removed (shower with the dressing in place, then change it afterwards).

### Post Operative Exercise/Activities

1. Please refrain from exercising for 6 weeks post surgery. *Absolutely no heavy lifting for 6 weeks.* We will follow up with you at post-surgical visits to answer any specific questions regarding exercise.
2. Do not drive until you have full range of motion.
3. Please refrain from showering for at least 24 hours after your second drain is removed. No ocean water, jacuzzi, or pool water for at least 8 weeks post surgery or until the incision is fully healed.
4. No tanning or sun exposure to the incision until the incision has healed completely, but we recommend no exposure for at least 12 months. Use an SPF of 30+ if sun exposure is unavoidable.

5. Remember to move your feet back and fourth for 1 week post surgery to help with circulation/prevent blood clots. Start walking as soon as possible.
6. Remember to do the deep breathing exercises for 1 week post surgery.
7. Do not smoke, as smoking delays healing and increases the risk of complications.
8. Return to work when you feel well enough. This could range from 2-6 weeks after surgery, depending on type of job.
9. In about 6 weeks you will be back to all of your normal activities.

### **What to Expect?**

1. Moderate postoperative pain (depending on how extensive the procedure is).
2. Areas on the abdomen will feel numb for a while (often months) and may take a long period of time to regain full skin sensation. Its normal to feel burning and soreness during the recovery.
3. You may expect to be bruised for a few weeks and swollen for a few months. You may have significant swelling of the lower extremities.
4. It may take 6 months – 1 year to see the final result.

For Questions or concerns, please call the office at 754-2681 or [info@drshaneseal.com](mailto:info@drshaneseal.com)