

THE FIRST GLANCE

Abdominoplasty (Tummy Tuck) Post-Operative Home Care Instructions

Supplies to have at home:

- **Your prescription medications** (*Prescription may be given on surgery day*)
- **Stool softener** (*ie: Restorolax/Lax-a-Day/Senokot*). Used to prevent constipation- ****start if no BM for 2 days**
- **Gravol** (oral medication for nausea)
- **Flexible gauze wrap** (*ie: Johnson & Johnson 3" or 4" soft gauze roll*)
- **Hypoallergenic Paper Medical Tape** (3M or similar)
- **Polysporin Ointment**
- **You may bring a drink** (*ie: ginger ale, Gatorade*) **with you on your surgery day to have in recovery room with you**

Rest and Relaxation:

- When resting, it is ok to lie on your side. Tuck your legs up when lying on your side and place 2 to 3 pillows under your knees when sleeping on your back.
- Take 10 nice big deep breaths every hour while awake.
- When coughing or sneezing open your mouth and place your hands on your abdomen. Gently push on your abdominal closure to protect it.

Activities

- Make sure you walk as much as possible and lean forward at your waist to decrease tension on your abdominal closure.
- After 2 weeks you can begin to stand straight.
- Do not lift more than 10 lbs or perform abdominal exercises for more than 4 weeks if you have had your rectus muscles tightened.

Medications

- Take all medications as prescribed, ensure you finish your entire course of antibiotics even if you do not experience any signs of infection.
- Resume prescribed medications unless otherwise stated
- Follow all instructions which may accompany the medications such as: taking with food, avoiding alcohol and driving restrictions.
- Take your pain medication as directed when you get home. You may find these do not eliminate your discomfort 100%, but you will feel more comfortable. Pain is expected, the goal is to make the pain tolerable.
- Apply Polysporin to your incision lines 1x a day once steri-strips are removed.

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Abdominal Care

- Remove your abdominal dressings **48 hours** after surgery.
- Leave your steri-strips on for as long as possible, typically they can be removed around 2 weeks. If they are very saturated or are starting to come off sooner then you may remove them.
- Wear your abdominal binder/garment for 20 to 24 hours per day for the first 4 weeks if you have had your abdominal muscles repaired (sheath plication), then for 12 hours during the day for 2 more weeks.
- If you did **not** require muscle repair then wear your garment for 20-24 hours per day for 2 weeks, then for 12 hours during the day for 2 more weeks.
- Bleeding from your surgical site may occur following surgery. If it occurs hold constant firm pressure for 10 minutes with a clean towel.
- It is normal to experience some redness and irritation to the incision around your navel during the first week or two, this is due to the type of suture that is used in the area.

Washing

- You can gently wash your abdominal area with a clean wet towel.
- You may shower 3 days after surgery even if you still have drains. **DO NOT** get the drains wet, it may be helpful to wear a lanyard around your neck and pin the drains up to keep them out of the way.
- Do not soak surgical sites - no baths, pools, hot tubs, or lake water for a minimum of 4 weeks.
- Dry surgical site by gently patting with a clean towel or allow to air dry.
- You do not require any bandages once your initial bandages are removed, however, most patients feel more comfortable with a bandage to provide extra protection. Flexible gauze wrap can be used as a dressing once the original dressings have been removed.

Drain Care

- Empty drains as instructed and document drainage. Drains are removed once drainage is less than **30cc over 24 hours. Abdominal drains must stay in for a minimum of 3 days.** *If you are from out-of-town your drains will be removed once drainage is less than **30cc over a 48 hour period**, this is to further reduce the incidence of seroma requiring drainage. Anticipate your abdominoplasty drains being in for approximately 10 days, but no longer than 14 days.
- Place Polysporin at drain site and cover with gauze, large band-aid or a feminine hygiene pad to absorb fluid that may leak out. This is normal and can occur for 1 week.
- Drain sites will close in 7 to 10 days.
- If there is a gush of fluid that occurs, this is likely fluid that was not picked up by the drain, this is normal. Get into the shower and gently push on your abdomen or breast to encourage the fluid to drain out.
- If drainage persists or is predominantly fresh blood go to your nearest emergency department and contact Dr. Brichacek.

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Two Weeks After Your Surgery

- Begin to massage your incisions with Skin Medica Scar Gel or Vaseline body lotion or BioOil. **Do not use vitamin E.**
- If your incisions are going to be exposed to the sun, apply SPF 45 or higher for at least one year to prevent tanning.

Please contact the clinic immediately and request to speak to a nurse or physician if you experience any of the following after surgery.

- Increased pain, increased redness, creamy or pus-like discharge, foul odour, or
- Increased warmth around surgical site, rash, fever exceeding 38.8° C (101.8°F)
- Chest pain (for continuous chest pain lasting more than 5 minutes – call 911)
- Unexplained sudden onset of shortness of breath
- Rapid pulse or heart palpitations
- Severe pain in leg that does not resolve and/or swelling of leg
- Changes in skin colour of an extremity, such as turning pale, red or blue
- Dizziness that does not resolve, or fainting
- Coughing up blood / Bloody diarrhea

After Hour Care

If there is a concern about your surgery or your healing, please call The First Glance Clinic at **204-885-1419**.

If the clinic is closed (evenings or weekends) or in case of an emergency, please call Dr. Brichacek 204-898-9933

If after 3 attempts you cannot reach Dr Brichacek, please call the plastic surgery resident by calling St Boniface Hospital Operator at 204-237-2053

Take time to rest and recover from your surgery, have a healthy diet and get some sleep. It is important that you follow these recommendations carefully so we can attain your surgical goals.