

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: ABDOMINOPLASTY

IMPORTANT: You can expect some swelling of the surgery site. Call Dr. Holzman immediately if you notice a sudden enlargement or abnormal swelling of the surgically treated areas, have sharp, continuous pain that is not relieved by pain medication, or if you notice excessive, bright red blood in your drains.

FIRST 24 HOURS: Take your pain, anti-spasm and nausea medications at regular intervals, and begin advancing to a regular diet as tolerated. After abdominoplasty you will feel fuller sooner, so have smaller, lighter meals, and avoid carbonated drinks that increase your intra-abdominal pressure. Generally, you will not need to check the incisions or dressings, and it should all be left intact until your first postoperative visit with Dr. Holzman. Record your drain output on the sheet provided. Avoid coughing, straining, reaching, and pushing yourself out of bed so as not to disrupt your repair.

DRESSINGS: Dr. Holzman will place you in a zippered compression garment during surgery. Wear the compression garment continuously for the first 3-5 days after surgery. The compression garment helps decrease swelling and bruising in the postoperative period. At the first postoperative visit, which is usually 3-5 days after your surgery, Dr. Holzman will remove the garment and will check your incision sites. He will usually give you permission at that time to remove the garment for showering and laundering purposes. After your shower, make sure to pat the incision sites dry before replacing the compression garment. You can apply gauze (panty liners work great!) to the incisions to absorb any drainage, as it will help keep the garment clean and dry. Apply Aquaphor, or other wound healing ointment such as A&D ointment 1-2 times daily to the incisions. Triple antibiotic ointment works well if so desired, but once the incisions are dry, around 3-5 days after surgery; you should switch to a wound healing ointment. The garment may be washed in cold water and dried on the air- dry cycle of your dryer. The garment should be worn for at least 18 hours per day for the first 4-6 weeks after surgery. Generally, the more liposuction you have during the procedure, the longer the swelling lasts, and the longer the garment should be worn.

DRAIN CARE: You will have 2 or more drains inserted at the time of surgery. Please document your drainage amount on the drain care sheet in your packet. It is usually not necessary to strip or milk the drains unless you notice one becomes occluded and stops draining. The drains

prevent blood and fluid from accumulating in the surgical site, and are typically needed for 7-14 days after surgery. If you are going to take a shower with the drains, please do not let the drain dangle by the stitch that keeps them in position. It will be uncomfortable, and the drain may pull out. Instead, use a shoestring placed through the loop on the drain and drape it around your neck to decrease the tension on the drain. Please bring your drain record to all of your appointments with Dr. Holzman. If you notice leaking around the drain exit site, and you may place some gauze around the site to absorb the drainage. You can also buy "puppy pads" to protect your bedding if desired as patients that have incisions on their back from liposuction will leak onto the bed.

ACTIVITY: Sleep flexed at the hips with a pillow under your knees and with the head of your bed elevated for at least 1 week after surgery. Due to the tension at the suture line, you may not be able to stand up completely straight for the first week or more. This may cause some strain on your back. If you experience back strain, lie down to relieve the pressure and use pain medications as needed. It is important not to add tension to the incision site to help with the quality of your scar as you heal. You may not drive a car for at least 2 weeks due to this limited body mobility. Refrain from strenuous activity for 4-6 weeks. Do not lift anything heavier than 10 pounds for at least 6 weeks-this includes pushing heavy furniture or appliances! Be careful climbing stairs during the recovery period as well. Make sure to discuss your activity limitations at each office visit with Dr. Holzman. All patients heal differently, and Dr. Holzman can guide you to the appropriate activity level that will prevent any delay in your recovery.

PAIN MANAGEMENT: Dr. Holzman most likely injected Exparel®, a long acting local anesthetic, in your abdominal wall to help control your pain after surgery. Exparel® is specifically designed to release pain medication over time, and can control pain for up to 72 hours. Depending on how you respond to Exparel®, you may require less additional pain medication during your recovery. During your surgery, muscles in your abdomen are tightened which makes your abdomen feels tense and uncomfortable. Dr. Holzman has prescribed Soma, a muscle relaxant that will help this feeling subside. You may take the Soma with your narcotic pain medicine. Avoid drinking carbonated beverages during the first 2 weeks, as the gas can increase the pressure in your abdomen. In addition, make sure to use the medicine for nausea right away. Vomiting can disrupt your sutures and can even open up your incision site.

HEALING: First of all, listen to your body and do not push yourself too early. Adequate rest is very important, and will allow your body to heal more quickly. Swelling is to be expected after surgery, and most swelling will resolve within the first 6 weeks after surgery. Some swelling will persist for up to 3 months or longer, and may reappear after exertion or standing for long periods of time. You may notice weight gain immediately following your surgery. This is caused by lymphatic fluids occupying the space left after the fatty deposits were removed. Your body will slowly excrete the fluids in the first 6 weeks of healing. Discoloration due to bruising can be expected. The bruising will disappear within 3-4 weeks. Avoid sun and tanning bed exposure during this time to prevent permanent discoloration in the bruised areas. Most patients experience areas of numbness in the surgical sites. The sensation will return to these areas after a few months. As the nerves regenerate, you may have some itching. Benadryl can relieve the itching if this occurs. Do not use heating pads or warm compresses in areas that are numb, as this may cause a burn injury. Generally patients begin feeling much better after the first 2 weeks, and are back to their normal routine after 6 weeks; however, all patients are unique in their recovery, so be patient with yourself during this time.

FINAL COMMENTS: Dr. Holzman is committed to making sure that you have the best result possible. Please communicate any issues to him before or after your surgery so that he can optimize your results and experience. Do not hesitate to contact the office or staff during office hours for any questions and call after hours for any emergency.