

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: LIPOSUCTION

IMPORTANT: Some swelling of the surgery site is expected. 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 or soaking your dressing.

FIRST 24 HOURS: Take your pain and nausea medications at regular intervals. A light diet is best for the day of surgery. Begin by taking liquids slowly and progress to soups and Jell-O if desired. Fluid replacement is essential so have a good, tasty sports beverage available. You may advance to a regular diet the next day as tolerated. You should be urinating at least once every 8 hours otherwise you may be getting dehydrated. Generally, you will not need to check the incisions or dressings, and all should be left intact until your first postoperative visit with Dr. Holzman. You may feel drowsy for the first 24-48 hours, and may require help the first few times that you get out of bed. Avoid strenuous activity.

DRESSINGS: Dr. Holzman will place you in a compression garment during surgery. Wear the compression garment continuously until your first postoperative visit with Dr. Holzman, which is usually 3-5 days after your surgery. During the first postoperative visit, Dr. Holzman will remove the garment to 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 may 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. The garment may be washed in cold water and dried on the air-dry cycle of your dryer. The compression garment is usually worn for 6 weeks as it helps to decrease bruising and swelling.

DRAIN CARE: If you have drains inserted at the time of surgery, follow these instructions. Please document your drainage amounts 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. Do not let the drains dangle when you shower as it will cause discomfort 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 drainage around the drain exit site, place some gauze around the site to absorb the drainage. You can also buy "puppy pads" to protect your bedding if desired as liposuction sites may drain onto your bedding.

ACTIVITY: It is important to be out of bed and walking early and frequently. Move your legs and ankles when in bed. Strenuous activity should be avoided for 2 weeks. Do not lift more than 15 pounds. Be careful climbing stairs as well. You may not drive a car while you are taking narcotic pain medications. 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 will prescribe a narcotic pain medication and a medicine to control nausea. Take both of these medications as scheduled in the first 24-48 hours after surgery. After that time, you may simply take them as needed and consider taking them nightly so you can rest well. Pain is best controlled if you take medicine when you first feel pain or ahead of time. After the first 24-48 hours, you may switch to non-narcotic pain medications if desired. Ibuprofen 600mg (three tablets) taken every 8 hours as needed provides excellent pain control and reduces inflammation as well. Take ibuprofen (brand name: Advil or Motrin) with food to avoid stomach upset. Refer to the pain management instruction sheet for more information.

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 12 weeks after surgery. Some swelling will persist for up to 6 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 and by fluid retention from your IV. You will excrete excess IV fluid within the first week. Your body will slowly absorb the lymphatic fluid over the next 12 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.