

# Daniel O. Beck, MD

Dallas Plastic Surgery Institute  
www.beckplasticsurgery.com

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## CHEST CONTOURING AFTER CARE INSTRUCTIONS

1. After surgery, it is important to have someone available to stay with you for the first 24 hours. You will be weak and drowsy and may require help the first few times you get out of bed.
2. After surgery it is best to go to bed with your head and shoulders elevated on at least 2 firm pillows (about 30 degrees). While in bed during your recovery, lie on your back, keep your head elevated and your knees slightly flexed. Move your legs and flex/extend your ankles several times per hour. Do not cross your legs, as this increases the risk for blood clots.
3. It is very important to get out of bed (with assistance) as early and often as possible after your surgery to prevent postoperative problems. While the goal is to move about, even getting out of bed and into a chair will be beneficial. Attempt to walk 15-20 minutes 6 times per day.
4. Please take frequent deep breaths to keep your lungs clear (15-20 per hour).
5. A light diet is best after surgery. Begin by taking liquids slowly and progress to soups or Jell-O. You may start a regular diet the next day. Over the next 6 weeks, a high protein diet will benefit your recovery. Daily protein supplementation with pre-made shakes (eg. Boost, Muscle Milk) or soluble powder (whey, soy etc.) from a nutrition store is recommended.
6. Please take the pain medication as directed for the first 2-3 days after surgery. It is not uncommon for you to need it every 3-4 hours. Take it with crackers, Jell-O, etc. After this time, take the pain medication only if you have pain. If the prescription pain medication is too strong for your pain needs, over the counter ibuprofen (400-800 mg every 6-8 hours) can be substituted. In addition, you may be given an anti-anxiety/muscle relaxant medication that you may take as well to prevent aggravation of the pain cycle.

### **7. IF LIPOSUCTION WAS PERFORMED:**

External sutures at the liposuction access sites will dissolve and fall out on their own over the first two weeks. It is normal to experience a pink fluid discharge from the liposuction access sites for several days after the procedure. This is mostly excess fluid introduced as part of the liposuction procedure. Drainage may increase as you become more mobile and stand for longer periods of time.

### **8. IF TISSUE EXCISION WAS PERFORMED:**

You may have a clear skin glue dressing (Dermabond) over your incision. This will protect the incision for 7-10 days. You can shower with the Dermabond on starting 24

hours (1 day) after surgery. Use a mild perfume/dye free soap and gently cleanse around the incision lines. Let the dressing dissolve naturally. Do not peel this dressing off as it may delay wound healing and cause excessive scarring.

If Dermabond is not used, you will have a steri-strip dressing over your incision. This will protect the incision for 7-10 days. You can shower with the strips on starting 48 hours (2 days) after surgery.

If you have external sutures, they will be removed in 7-10 days and you will wear steri-strips for 3-4 weeks (Dr. Beck's office will provide the steri-strips).

Occasionally small drains are used to draw off any accumulating fluid after surgery. The bulb should be kept collapsed at all times. The fluid will need to be removed from the bulb every 3 hours. Please keep a record of the time and how much fluid is emptied from the bulb. Bring this record with you to the follow-up office appointment. Usually drains are removed between 3-7 days after surgery. The drains will not be removed if you have drained more than 30 cc within a 24-hour period.

9. The surgical compression garment and foam padding must be worn **AT ALL TIMES** for the first week. You may remove the garment to shower starting 24 hours after surgery. Be sure someone is with you to help, as it is not uncommon to feel dizzy or lightheaded while standing for prolonged periods of time. Sit or lie down 20 minutes prior to showering.

10. 1 week after surgery the foam padding can be discarded and the surgical compression garment worn alone under your clothing.

11. 2 weeks after surgery, a short sleeve Lycra shirt without zippers (eg. Under Armour) may be purchased at a department store and substituted for the compression garment during the day. Continue to wear the surgical compression garment at night throughout this week.

12. After 3 weeks, you may continue to wear the undershirt or the compression garment for comfort as needed. Since increased swelling during periods of moderate to heavy activity is common during the healing process, it is recommended to wear your choice of garment during and for several hours after any planned activity.

13. **DO NOT SMOKE** or ingest any nicotine containing products. This is very important for optimal wound healing.

14. You may gradually resume normal daily activities after 24 hours being careful to avoid any activity that causes pain or discomfort. Keeping your metabolism boosted will enhance your results; therefore, exercise of any type is encouraged as soon as you feel ready. Start with low impact and/or light exercise as your body allows. In general, strenuous activities and exercises are to be avoided until 2-3 weeks after surgery.

15. Prolonged soaking of the incision sites in a bathtub, hot tub, swimming pool or other body of water should be avoided for 3-4 weeks to allow proper healing to occur.

16. All incisions will be extremely sensitive to sunlight during the healing phase. Direct sun contact or tanning booths are to be avoided. Use of a clinical grade sunscreen with SPF 30 and zinc oxide (UVA and UVB protection) is recommended for at least 6 months.

17. Beginning at 3 weeks after surgery, apply a scar cream to the access incisions to maximize wound healing. Use the cream for 6 months after surgery. The addition of a hydrating cream and vitamin cream will promote early softening and maturation of these areas.

### **WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SURGERY**

Most people experience muscle soreness as opposed to sharp pains for about 7 days after surgery. In addition, sensations like numbness, itching and burning are common during the healing process. These sensations may last several weeks and will gradually disappear.

Bruising and swelling are to be expected. Bruising can be apparent for as long as 1-2 months afterwards. The bruising will move down your body as they are absorbed.

The body retains fluid in response to surgery so do not expect to see any immediate change in chest size or weight loss. In addition, you may find that your clothes do not fit as easily as before for the first 3-4 weeks. Be patient. The swelling will gradually subside. In the long run, you will see more of a change in the way your clothes fit than a decrease in pounds.

Discomfort from gas and bloating can be magnified after surgery. Suggestions to minimize symptoms include limiting spicy foods, avoiding carbonated drinks, and restricting intake of sugar-free products containing Xylitol.

### **MASSAGE THERAPY**

Lymphatic massage will help increase circulation and alleviate any hardness or lumpiness felt underneath the skin at the surgical sites. Massage can begin 2 weeks after surgery. Make sure the massage therapist is well versed in lymphatic drainage techniques. 45-60 minutes of therapy is recommended 2-3 times per week for 4 weeks.

#### **Please note:**

**- If you have nausea, vomiting, rash, shortness of breath, or diarrhea after taking your medications, please call our office.**

**- If you develop a fever (oral temperature greater than 100°), redness and/or increased pain at the surgical incision sites, please call Dr. Beck immediately.**

### **FOLLOW-UP INSTRUCTIONS**

It is important to be seen by Dr. Beck after your initial post-op checks. He will see you for follow-up appointments at 1 week, 3 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months, 6 months and 1-year post-op. For your convenience you may schedule your appointments at either our Southlake or Dallas office (see below). To schedule your appointment please call us at 214-818-4751 between the hours of 8:30 am – 5:00 pm at least 1 week prior to your desired date.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL DR. BECK**

If you need immediate care, please call Dr. Beck anytime on his cell. There is no such thing as a minor question. I would rather you call me than wonder and not do the right thing, so please call my office, or email me anytime.

Dr. Beck's cell: given at time of surgery

Dr. Beck's office: 214-818-4751

Dr. Beck's email: [drbeck@dpsi.org](mailto:drbeck@dpsi.org)

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