

DR. CUSHING'S POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Abdominoplasty (Tummy tuck)

The first 24 hours are best spent resting. You should get up to walk to the bathroom and kitchen several times per day and try to take deep breaths several times an hour. This will help prevent blood clots in your legs and help your lungs heal from the anesthesia used in surgery.

For the first few weeks, you will not be able to stand up straight. This is normal and will improve over the first two weeks after surgery.

DRESSINGS

You will have an abdominal binder after surgery that can be removed to shower. You can wear this binder or another binder 24/7 except for showering for six weeks after surgery. This binder helps with compression, comfort, and will help you achieve your final contoured result more quickly.

The only removable stitches you will have will be around the drain site. The rest of the sutures will dissolve on their own over the course of several weeks.

You can use maxi pads or gauze along your incisions within your binder. You can put Vaseline or aquaphor on your incisions. You can apply topical antibiotics to areas that are red and warm to the touch. Avoid using topical antibiotics on the entire incision because they may cause skin irritation.

DRAINS

You will have suction drains in place to help remove the fluid your body makes after surgery. You will empty those drains twice a day and record the amounts on the chart you receive. It is very important to keep track of this and bring the record to your clinic visit. We will remove the drains when they are draining less than 25 ml in a 24-hour period.

You can expect drainage (usually bloody), swelling, bruising and discoloration of your torso from the surgery itself and any liposuction that was performed. You can use antibiotic cream or Vaseline and gauze to all your incisions for the first week and to any areas that are still raw or slower-healing after that.

MEDICATIONS

Pain medication prescribed post-operatively (usually Norco) should be taken as directed to relieve pain. You can also take over the counter medications such as ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) or naproxen (Aleve). Do not take Tylenol in addition to the prescription pain medication. If you are prescribed antibiotics, take those until all the pills are gone.

Pain medication (especially opioids such as hydrocodone) along with surgery on your abdomen can cause constipation. Take a stool softener twice a day and try to eat foods with lots of fiber. If you are still having trouble with bowel movements, you may need to add a laxative or glycerin suppository to help.

The tube placed in your throat for anesthesia during your surgery may cause your throat to be sore for a few days. This is best relieved with cold liquids or a sore throat spray.

ACTIVITY

Because abdominoplasty involves removal of the extra abdominal skin and tightening of the abdominal muscles, you will experience some difficulty standing up straight for 1-2 weeks after surgery .

- You may find it more comfortable to place a pillow or two under your knees while in bed.
- The tightness will gradually disappear as you heal and re-start normal activities.
- Do not try to stretch or pull the abdomen straight during the first two weeks of healing.

Tummy tucks are one of the most uncomfortable operations we do. You will likely experience some pain for several weeks after the surgery..

After the first 2 weeks, you may resume light exercise (walking). You can return to most exercises by 6 weeks but do not do abdominal exercises until about 3 months after surgery.

DIET

Due to the anesthesia from your surgery, the tube placed in the throat may cause the throat to be sore. This is best relieved with cold liquids. The soreness disappears in a few days.

You may resume your normal diet. Start with more bland foods and gradually add in more regular foods once you feel ready.

SHOWERING

You may take a warm (not hot) shower 48 hours after surgery. Do not take a bath. Remove all of the dressings from your incisions, including the yellow gauze on your skin. If this is stuck, you may get in the shower and the water will help loosen it.

After the shower, you can pat dry with a towel or air-dry, but do not rub your incisions. You can apply a fragrance-free moisturizer to the abdomen but not on the incisions.

HEALING

You may notice that some days are better than others- for example, you may have less pain on day 2 after surgery than day 4. This is normal and relates to how you heal and what activities you are doing.

You will have swelling and bruising after surgery that will heal in the weeks afterwards. Swelling will take up to 3 months to fully resolve while the bruising will heal in the 2-3 weeks after surgery.

It is normal to have itching and/or areas of numbness along your abdominal wall following your surgery. This gradually subsides after 2-3 months as your body heals.

After your incisions heal over (after the first two weeks or so), you can continue to apply the Vaseline/aquaphor or switch to scar creams or vitamin E. Scars typically fade in months to a year after your surgery.

Avoid direct sunlight exposure to your healing scars for the first year following surgery. Use a sunscreen with zinc oxide along with a SPF of 30 or greater for maximal protection.

Call our office at 601-939-9999 if you experience any of the following:

- Heavy, bright red, bloody drainage
- A sudden increase in firmness and swelling of the abdomen
- Fever above 101.5 degrees