



BOICE-WILLIS CLINIC  
**PLASTIC  
SURGERY**

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### **INSTRUCTION SHEET FOR ABDOMINOPLASTY**

*Please follow some basic guidelines in order to maximize results and to minimize any risks or complications in your post-operative recovery.*

#### ***Before your surgery:***

- **Avoid smoking and second hand smoke.** Cigarette smoking impairs wound healing, blood flow, and respiratory secretions. Do **not** use nicotine patch or gum at this time.
- **Avoid alcohol.** Alcohol can be a blood thinner, so we recommend no drinking for two weeks prior to surgery and for two weeks following surgery.
- **Avoid aspirin, aspirin-containing products, and anti-inflammatory products.** All of these products may increase bleeding during surgery. Since many over-the-counter medications contain aspirin, please read labels carefully and refer to the comprehensive list of medications to avoid. *If aspirin is being prescribed for a heart condition or other medical conditions, please notify us for further instructions.*
- **Scrub body with antibacterial cleanser prior to surgery.** Also, please shave the hair in the upper pubic region.
- **Have a support system in place.** Make arrangements for a responsible adult to take you to and from the hospital or surgery center and remain with you for the first 24 hours.
- **Do not have anything to eat or drink after midnight the day prior to surgery.** This includes water, chewing gum, and mints. On the morning of surgery, you can brush your teeth but do not swallow any of the water. Prescription medication may be taken with a small sip of water on the morning of surgery.
- **Drink extra water the day before surgery** (but be sure to stop drinking by midnight!) A well-hydrated body is less likely to experience nausea after anesthesia.
- **Get prescriptions filled prior to surgery.** You will be given antibiotics and pain medications at your pre-operative visit, get them filled in advance of your surgery.
- **Follow guidelines outlined in Dr. Szymanski's peri-operative protocol.** These will all help to decrease the amount of swelling and bruising from your surgery.
- **Get proper rest the day before surgery.**

#### ***The day of surgery:***

- Wear comfortable, loose fitting clothing.
- Do not wear any jewelry or make-up.
- Bring compression garment if instructed to do so.
- Please arrive to the hospital or surgery center at the appropriate scheduled time.

**Once you are home:**

*You are now on the road to recovery. It is very important that you pay close attention to following the instructions listed below. These will help to assure improved wound healing and decrease the risk of postoperative complications. Following the instructions will help make your recovery easier.*

- **Take your antibiotics and pain medication as prescribed.** Try to have some food in your stomach when taking medications to avoid nausea. If you experience any itching, rashes, or respiratory difficulties, please notify the office, as you may be allergic to one of the medications. Valium acts to reduce muscle spasm, and it can be very helpful in reducing discomfort when taken in addition to pain medication. Start to wean off the pain medications once symptoms improve. For minor discomfort you may take Tylenol®, if not allergic.
- **“Lounge chair” position is best.** While you are in bed, the best position for comfort and least strain on your incisions and stomach muscles is the “lounge chair” position. Your head should be elevated at 45° and your knees flexed at all times. You can use a pillow under your knees to relieve any discomfort. Do not cross your legs.
- **Movement is an important part of restoring proper circulation and breathing.** Walking “wakes-up” all your body systems, it improves circulation, encourages breathing and helps move gas along the digestive tract. Take advantage of trips to the bathroom for short walks around the house. Initially you may need assistance getting in and out of bed. Climbing stairs should be kept to a minimum for the first week after surgery.
- **Do not stand up completely straight when you walk for the first week to ten days.** After surgery, you should walk slightly hunched over to take tension off your abdominal muscles and to reduce strain of your lower back. Gradually move towards the upright position as discomfort subsides.
- **Deep breathing and coughing is extremely important following surgery.** Deep breathing expands the lungs, aids circulation, and helps prevent pneumonia. The first time you cough will be the hardest. Try holding a pillow over the abdominal incision for support.
- **Foley catheter often left in place overnight.** A foley catheter is used to drain the urine during the surgery, and it is often left in until the next morning both for patient comfort so you don’t have to get up the first night and to avoid problems with urinary retention. The nursing staff at the surgery center will provide instructions for removal in the morning.
- **Follow proper drain care.** You will have two surgical drains in your lower abdomen. These will stay in place for approximately 5 to 7 days, sometimes longer if drainage is persistent. Please empty and record drainage amounts on the drain worksheet provided. You or your caregiver will be instructed in their care prior to discharge. Your drains are likely to be removed on your first postoperative visit but bring your worksheet on this visit. Expect to have some drainage for the first day after they are removed.
- **All sutures are underneath the skin and are made of a combination of non-absorbable and absorbable material.** Sutures are removed approximately 2-3 weeks after your surgery. Your incisions are covered by steri-strips (tape), which provide more support to the incision. These are to be left in place and will be removed or changed by the MD or physician assistant.
- **You may shower 48 hours after your surgery.** Let the water hit your back and not forcefully onto your incisions, and try to avoid saturating the wounds. Gently pat them dry and re-apply your garment. Use a cloth belt to attach the drains to with safety pins when you shower. Avoid soaking in baths or whirlpools, as this will increase swelling in the body.

- **Avoid heavy lifting, pushing, pulling, and straining or strenuous exercise for 6-8 weeks after surgery.** Casual walking is encouraged, but avoid any activity that causes any tension on your incisions in order to keep scars as fine as possible. In addition, avoid sexual intercourse for two weeks after surgery.
- **Driving is usually permitted two weeks after surgery as long as you are not taking pain medication.** We do not want you making poor decisions behind the wheel if you are having any discomfort, and remember that you are “under the influence” when taking prescription pain medication. You will be informed of when you may drive at your follow-up visit.
- **Avoid sun exposure on incision sites for three months.** Scars will tend to redden more during the initial period, so they need to be protected from sun exposure with clothing and strong sun block. Avoid tanning beds for the first three months as well.
- **Remember to eat healthy and include protein in your diet.** Protein is essential to the healing process, and it is best to avoid foods with lots of sodium as they will increase swelling. Continue Vitamedica program for two weeks following surgery.
- **Do not hesitate to call the office if you have any questions regarding your recovery.** Observe your skin and incision carefully. Look for any redness, warmth at incision site, excessive swelling, unusual drainage, opening of an incision or an increased temperature (over 100<sup>0</sup>). Call the office if any of these should occur.
- **Come to your scheduled follow-up visits.** Call the office to schedule a follow-up appointment, if this was not previously arranged. We closely follow patients after their surgery to ensure proper healing and to reinforce postoperative instructions to make this the best possible surgical experience.