

# PARK MEADOWS COSMETIC SURGERY

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## Post-Operative and Home Care Instructions for Abdominoplasty Surgery

**DIET:** Start with clear liquids and toast or crackers. If those are well tolerated, progress to a regular diet.

**DRIVING:** No driving for 1 to 2 weeks after your procedure or while taking pain medicine.

**ACTIVITY:** You may walk and climb stairs the day of surgery. Walk at least 3 times daily to decrease the risk of developing blood clots. It is recommended that you walk in a stooped or flexed position for the first week after surgery. After 4 weeks you may perform moderate activity, such as brisk walking. Do not lift anything heavier than a gallon of milk for 6 weeks. After 6 weeks you may resume more strenuous aerobic work and lifting activities.

**WORK:** Depending on your career and your rate of healing you should be able to return to work within 2 to 3 weeks of surgery. Your surgeon will be able to give you a better estimate depending on your physical and professional profile.

**WOUND CARE:** Several drains will be placed during surgery to prevent excessive fluid build-up under the skin. These drains should be emptied three times a day. A compression garment will be placed during surgery and should remain in place 24 hours a day for the first two weeks. This garment can be unzipped on one side the evening of surgery and as needed during the first 2-3 days to allow the skin to "breathe" and to provide comfort. A second garment will be provided to you after all drainage tubes are removed (usually around 7-10 days after surgery) so that you may wash one garment while wearing the other. After two weeks the garment can be removed for short periods of time while showering but should otherwise be worn around the clock. After 3 weeks, many patients will only need to wear their garment during the daytime hours, though many patients prefer to continue wearing the garment around the clock. If your garment is causing significant discomfort be sure to contact your physician.

**SWELLING:** Mild to moderate swelling and bruising should be expected during the first several weeks. Some swelling and fluid retention can persist for several months. Remember everyone heals at a different rate, and your surgeon will follow your progress closely. Do not use a heating pad on abdomen.

**BATHING:** You may shower 48 hours after surgery, but someone must be present with you to ensure that you are stable and do not become "light-headed". When you shower do not allow water to run or spray to hit directly over the incision site. Do not submerge the incision in a bath or swimming pool for 4 to 6 weeks.

**MEDICATIONS:** Ask your surgeon when you can resume your blood thinning medications. All other prescription medications may be resumed immediately, as usual. While you are taking pain medicine, you are encouraged to follow a high fiber diet and take a stool softener such as Colace (available over the counter), as pain medications tend to cause constipation. Your surgeon may give you antibiotics for several days to help prevent infection.

**SMOKING AND ALCOHOL:** Absolutely no smoking or second hand smoke during the first 4 weeks after surgery as it impedes wound healing and can lead to serious wound complications. Alcohol consumption is dangerous while taking pain medicine and it has a tendency to worsen bleeding.

**POST-OPERATIVE APPOINTMENT:** Your first follow-up visit will be 1 week after surgery. Your surgeon will then schedule visits at appropriate intervals to monitor your progress.

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:** Call your surgeon immediately if you experience any of the following: pain not relieved by pain medicine, bleeding, redness at the incision site, or fever over 101°F.