



MOUNT AUBURN HOSPITAL

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www.massplasticsurgeons.com



HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL  
TEACHING HOSPITAL

## **ABDOMINOPLASTY (Tummy Tuck) INSTRUCTIONS**

- In the week before your operation:
  - Consider eating pineapple, it may help reduce bruising
  - Consider supplementing with Arnica montana, it may help reduce bruising
  - Complete household chores and prepare meals for the first few days of postoperative recovery
  - Follow preoperative instructions with eating, drinking, and medications
- **Postoperatively, get out of bed and walk (with assistance) every few hours after your operation to decrease the chance of postoperative problems such as blood clots.**
- Practice 15-20 deep breaths every hour to keep your lungs open.
- After surgery, it is important for you to have someone available to stay with you for the first 24-48 hours, as you may feel drowsy. You may require help the first few times you get out of bed.
- You may need to walk slightly “stooped over” (bent at the hips) for a few days to release tension on the suture line. When in bed keep your head elevated about 30 degrees (two pillows under your head and back) with the knees slightly flexed (one pillow under your knees).
- Take your medications as directed to manage your discomfort and symptoms.
  - Acetaminophen (Tylenol) 1000 mg every 8 hours, space doses 4 hours after Ibuprofen so one or the other is taken every 4 hours
  - Ibuprofen (Motrin) 800 mg every 8 hours, space doses 4 hours after Acetaminophen so one or the other is taken every 4 hours
  - Gabapentin 300 mg every 8 hours for 7 days
  - Vitamin C 500 mg daily for 50 days
  - Oxycodone 5 mg – 1-2 tablets every 6 hours as needed for pain, though many patients may not need it
  - Colace 100 mg twice daily to prevent constipation, it is important to have a bowel movement each day
  - Zofran 8 mg every 8 hours if needed for nausea
  - Scopolamine patch will be placed behind the ear on the day of surgery and can stay for 3 days

Please contact Dr. Helena O. B. Taylor or Dr. Stephen R. Sullivan for additional information on plastic surgery.

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- Eat a light diet for 2-3 days and avoid spicy food. Some suggestions to ease abdominal discomfort or indigestion after surgery:
  - Drink water or warm liquids
  - Prune juice to prevent constipation
- The drainage bulbs connected to the end of the drains should be compressed at all times to keep suction. It is normal for red fluid and blood clots to form in the drains. Please record time and amounts of drainage over a 24-hour period – we will provide a form. Usually the drains will be removed when the drainage is 30cc or less in a 24-hour period. All patients heal differently and according to many factors. On average, drains remain for about one week.
- You may shower or sponge bath the day after the operation with assistance. Avoid submerging the drains.
- Wear the abdominal binder continuously for 3 weeks after surgery, then for 12 hours of each day for an additional 3 weeks, and thereafter as needed for comfort. You can take it off to shower. The binder helps control swelling and fluid build-up. If the binder rubs your skin, it can be worn over a soft t-shirt. We can provide suggestions for other types of binders to order as well.
- Most wounds will be closed with absorbable sutures that are buried and skin glue. The skin glue forms a barrier to water. Please do not remove the glue, it will fall off on its own after a few weeks.
- Infection is uncommon, though please call Dr. Taylor or Dr. Sullivan immediately at any sign of infection which would be signaled by fever, increased pain, new redness or swelling in the abdominal area.

#### **ACTIVITY**

- For the first few days following surgery, raising your blood pressure and heart rate can cause bleeding. Stress on your abdominal muscles or vigorous could stretch or break the stitches. We recommend walking 15 minutes 2 to 3 times per day and gradually increasing activity tailored to your recovery.

Please do not drive for 7 to 10 days or while taking pain medications such as oxycodone.

Do not lift anything heavier than 10 lbs, run, lift weights, or perform strenuous exercise for 6 weeks. You may begin having sexual intercourse 4 weeks postoperatively.

#### **GENERAL OUTCOMES**

- Moderate swelling of your abdomen is to be expected. This is most notable in the pubic region, above the incision, and in areas of liposuction. You may find that your clothes may not fit as easily as before. Please be patient. And because of the removal of tissue from your abdomen, a feeling of tightness is to be expected. The swelling and feeling of tightness will gradually subside over the following months.

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- Tingling and numbness of the skin is normal after the operation. Sensation usually returns gradually and slowly over weeks to months. Please be patient and avoid resting against hot surfaces, which can injure or burn the skin.
- Scars take one full year to mature. You may notice that they become red, raised and firm for several weeks to months before becoming soft, flat and pale. Avoid Vitamin E as it can irritate the scar. Mederma has no proven benefit and is not worth the expense. Silicone cream or skin moisturizer with sunscreen and gentle massage may be helpful.
- Infrequently after surgery you may have fluid in the abdomen after the drains are removed. If this happens, you will notice a fullness or sloshy feeling and may even have some drainage. Please contact our office so we can aspirate it easily.

It is important to be seen by Dr. Taylor or Dr. Sullivan after your operation. They will see you in follow-up appointments at 5 to 7 days, 3 to 6 months, and 1 year or as often as needed post-op. Call Taylor & Sullivan Plastic Surgery to schedule your appointments at (617) 492-0620 between the hours of 8:30 – 5:00 or visit our webpage at [www.massplasticsurgeons.com](http://www.massplasticsurgeons.com). We are always available for postoperative concerns or emergencies and can be reached through our paging service 24 hours per day at (617) 492-0620.

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