



MOUNT AUBURN HOSPITAL

**TAYLOR & SULLIVAN PLASTIC SURGERY**  
**HELENA O. TAYLOR, MD, PhD, FACS**  
**STEPHEN R. SULLIVAN, MD, MPH, FACS**

300 Mount Auburn St Ste 304  
Cambridge, MA 02138

Phone: 617-492-0620 FAX: 617-492-0631

[www.massplasticsurgeons.com](http://www.massplasticsurgeons.com)



HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL  
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**ABDOMINOPLASTY (Tummy Tuck) AFTERCARE INSTRUCTIONS**

- In the week before your Tummy Tuck 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
  - Order two compression garments specific to your size. The garments do not need to be expensive. Dr. Taylor and Dr. Sullivan can make some recommendations of garments that can be ordered from Amazon or online.
- **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 Tummy Tuck, 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).
- Please take your medications as directed by Dr. Taylor or Dr. Sullivan to manage discomfort or symptoms. You are likely to be given:
  - 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 or Celecoxib (Celebrex) 200 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. If you have dizziness, double vision, or significant sleep disturbances, consider stopping the Gabapentin.

You may also be given:

- 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

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- Colace 100 mg twice daily to prevent constipation, it is important to have a bowel movement each day. Prune juice may also be helpful.
- 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 to prevent nausea
- 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

#### **WOUND CARE**

- 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 and wash your skin as you normally would with soap and water. Avoid soaking the incision, although it will not hurt to get a splash of water on the wounds. Avoid submerging the drains. Gently pat dry after washing.
- Wear the abdominal binder continuously for 3 weeks after tummy tuck 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 covered with 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. Do not apply any lotions, potions, ointments, creams or solutions (e.g. no hydrogen peroxide or alcohol) as they can be harmful to the fragile healing tissue.
- Do not smoke or expose yourself to smokers or nicotine as skin and wounds can be compromised.
- Infection is very uncommon, but please call Dr. Taylor or Dr. Sullivan at any sign of infection which would be signaled by fever, increased pain, spreading redness or significant swelling.

#### **ACTIVITY**

- For the first few days following Tummy Tuck surgery, raising your blood pressure and heart rate can cause bleeding. Stress on your abdominal muscles or vigorous activity could stretch or break the stitches. We

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recommend walking 15 minutes several times per day and gradually increasing activity tailored to your recovery.

- Please do not drive until turning the steering wheel can be done safely and without pain (usually 7 to 10 days). Do not drive while taking pain medications such as oxycodone.
- Do not lift anything heavier than 10-20 lbs, run, lift weights, or perform strenuous exercise for 6 weeks. You may begin having sexual intercourse approximately 4 weeks postoperatively.
- Massage to the areas of scar and liposuction can help increase circulation and soften firm areas under the skin. Please wait at least 3 to 4 weeks after surgery to start massage to avoid increased swelling.

**GENERAL OUTCOMES**

- Moderate swelling and bruising is to be expected. This is most notable in the pubic region, above and below the incision, and in areas of liposuction. Bruising may last for a few weeks and will move down your body due to gravity.
- The incisions often appear lumpy and bumpy. This is normal and the incisions will flatten over a few weeks.
- 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.
- You may notice that you actually gain weight following Tummy Tuck and Liposuction. This is because the body retains fluid with swelling. The swelling may persist for 6 weeks or more before it slowly decreases.
- Tingling, itching, and numbness of the skin are all normal after Tummy Tuck. Tingling and itching are signs of healing and will resolve. Sensation usually returns gradually and slowly over weeks to months though some areas may always have decreased sensation. 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.
- Please call our office (617-492-0620) if you have:
  - Continuous bleeding (a small amount bleeding from the incision is expected)
  - Significantly more swelling on one side when compared to the other

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- Worsening pain
- Fever, spreading redness or irritation of the skin
- Shortness of breath



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It is important to be seen by Dr. Taylor or Dr. Sullivan after your operation. They will see you in follow-up appointments at 1 week, 3-4 weeks, 3-6 months, and 1 year or as often as needed post-op. Call Taylor and 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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