

ABDOMINOPLASTY (TUMMY TUCK) POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Upon leaving the operating room, a support girdle (garment) will be placed on you. **This compression garment is to remain in place continuously for 24 hours after surgery. After the first 24 hours, you may remove the garment to shower only.** This girdle/garment is an essential factor in promoting a safe and comfortable post-operative period. The garment compresses the involved area to reduce swelling (edema) and help promote skin conformity. If you start to feel itchy due to the girdle (garment) after several days, you may wear a cotton t-shirt and place the girdle (garment) over it. This will help alleviate the itch. The compression garment needs to be worn for 6 weeks continuously.

During the first 24 hours after surgery, you may lay in bed with a couple of pillows propped up under your knees and head. After the first 24 hours you may gradually resume light and minimal activity. Walking straight is very important. Back pain will result due to walking bending down as it will also slow down your ability to recover quicker. Be as active and mobile as you possibly can. Lying in bed all day is not recommended.

You may have a urinary catheter in place to ease the ability to rest during your first 24 hours. The next day following your surgery, your urinary catheter will be removed.

Do not engage in any strenuous activities for first two weeks after surgery. Exertion that elevates blood pressure can cause bleeding.

If you experience pain, please take your prescribed medications as directed. Remember to take these with food. **Avoid Aspirin or any Aspirin related medications (Ibuprofen Nurofen, Voltarol) for at least 2 weeks after surgery. REFER TO YOUR LIST OF MEDICATIONS NOT TO TAKE.** These can cause bleeding. Some pain medications may cause nausea and constipation.

You will also be sent home with drains which exit through the skin. These drains will be removed in the clinic when the amount of drainage has reduced. The drains may need to stay in for as long as seven days after your surgery. Please keep track of the amount of fluid produced in each drain separately so that prior their removal, your surgeon or nurse can have an idea of the amount of drainage coming out. The colour of the drainage fluid may range from a red to yellowish clear tint. Do not be alarmed by the colour of the fluids. You may also leak fluid from around where the drain exits through the skin. Again this is entirely normal.

Drink plenty of fluids. It is easy to become dehydrated after surgery.

If you are discharged with an oral antibiotic, please complete the full course as directed.

Avoid alcohol while taking any medications.

Contact the ward at the hospital or text this number (07830 997018) if you experience any of these symptoms:

- **Temperature above 100.4°F (38°C)**
- **Shakes and chills**
- **Excessive bleeding from incision site/s,**
- **Severe or sudden pain with a reddened swollen area which feels hard like a baseball and warm to the touch**

You may shower 24 hours after your surgery. Wash the incision sites with water gently and pat dry. You will notice Steri-Strips (surgical tape) over the incisions. These can get wet and will not fall off. They are placed to provide additional support. These will eventually fall off by themselves or be removed at your clinic visit. Do not use alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, or other topical treatments without first consulting with the Refresh team.

After having your Steri Strips (surgical tapes) removed, you may also notice a few blisters around your scar. This is normal and may result from the Steri strips (surgical tape). The nurse may apply a small amount of antibiotic ointment. The blisters will heal up within a couple of days. During the healing phase, scars may also appear to be slightly raised and red. This is a normal appearance with any scar.

Swelling and or bruising throughout your abdominal area is normal and should begin to subside four to six weeks after surgery.

Avoid direct sun exposure to your scars for several months after surgery.

Please be aware that smoking or the use of unauthorized medications can lead to complications and jeopardize the results of your surgery.