

HAND & PLASTIC SURGERY CENTRE, P.L.C.

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Surgery of the Hand & Upper Extremity
Microvascular Surgery
Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery

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ABDOMINOPLASTY POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS

NORMAL SYMPTOMS: It is normal to experience soreness, bruising, swelling, tightness and some degree of pain for the first few days following surgery. These conditions will lessen each day. All patients will experience numbness of the abdominal wall and surgical sites after surgery and itching or tingling sensations are normal during healing. This will gradually subside over the next 2-3 months. Residual skin irregularities at the ends of the incisions may be elevated and swollen, but this will improve with time.

DRAIN CARE: Drains are used to limit fluid collections. There is always some swelling and even bruising. The drain entrance sites may be padded for comfort. The hospital staff will teach you how to strip or milk the drains as well as measure and record their output daily prior to discharge. Bring the drain record provided on the backside of your drain care sheet with you to all office visits after surgery. See drain care sheet.

COMPRESSION GARMENT: After surgery, you will be placed in a binder that will be provided to you for abdominal support and to reduce swelling. This should be worn at all times for the next 4-6 weeks following surgery except when bathing or laundering.

DRESSINGS/SHOWERING: You may shower as soon as you feel able. Steri-strips will stay on for two weeks and gradually fall off. If they are still in place after two weeks, you can remove them. Clean with mild soap and water. Gently pat dry and cover with gauze dressings to control drainage from your incisions. Due to decreased sensation, be very cautious with the water temperature.

SOAKING: Do NOT get into a bathtub, hot tub or swimming pool for 8 weeks following surgery because soaking can cause wound healing issues.

DRIVING: You may begin driving after your 1st postoperative appointment ONLY if you are no longer taking prescription pain medication (narcotics).

ACTIVITY: You may walk the day of surgery. Put pillows behind your back and under your legs to keep your waist slightly flexed. This flexed position decreases back discomfort. You may walk up the stairs with assistance, one step at a time no more than 2 times a day. When at rest, flex and extend your feet to help decrease leg swelling. Walking is an excellent form of exercise. You should change your position and walk around the house every few hours. We encourage you not to do any aerobic activity until you are about 4 weeks post-op as this increases intra-abdominal pressure, which may be detrimental to the abdominal muscle sutures. Sexual activity: as soon as you are comfortable with it.

RETURNING TO WORK: Depending on what your job entails returning to work will be different for everyone. Generally, most of our patients take off 2-3 weeks, if your job is fairly non-physical. If your job demands a lot of hard physical labor, you may want to take 4-6 weeks off.

SCARS: Scars take at least 1 year to fade and flatten. During this time, it is better that you protect them from the sun. NO exposure for the first 3 months. Even through a bathing suit, sunlight can reach the skin and cause damage. It is imperative that you wear a sunscreen with a skin-protective factor (SPF) of at least 30 at all times.

NAUSEA/CONSTIPATION: It is important for you to have someone stay with you the day of the procedure. Nausea and/or vomiting may occur while taking oral antibiotics or pain medications. Should this happen, take your medications with food. If you experience constipation, we suggest eating foods that are high in fiber and drink plenty of water (You may try over-the-counter stool softeners). Call our office if these symptoms persist.

WHEN TO CALL (616) 459-4131:

- If you develop redness (like a sunburn) around your incisions
- Fever of 100.5 or greater
- Persistent vomiting
- Unusual swelling, bleeding or increased pain
- Develop hives, diarrhea or other reactions to medicine
- Any other questions or concerns

Please remember that for the vast majority of patients the goal is significant improvement, not perfection. Please call our office at the above telephone numbers should you have any questions or concerns.

POST-OP APPOINTMENT: _____

PRESCRIBED MEDICATION(S): _____

Please take Narcotic/OTC medication as directed and as needed. DO NOT drive or operate machinery if you are taking a narcotic. If you are prescribed antibiotics, take as directed until gone. Taking an incomplete course can lead to recurrence of infection. Please take antibiotics with food as this may cause upset stomach. Please ask physician before you begin taking aspirin, motrin/ibuprofen or other anti-inflammatory medications, as these can increase risk of bleeding. **IF NAUSEATED, TRY NON-ACIDIC LIQUIDS, DRY TOAST OR OTHER BLAND FOODS*

Patient Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Hospital Staff Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Physician Signature: _____ **Date:** _____