



## Fat Grafting Post-Operative Instructions

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*Your guide to a smooth and confident recovery*

Nursing phone number: 437-494-3536

*Outside of business hours, texting is available on the nursing line. For emergencies, please go to your nearest emergency room.*

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### Dressings & Wound Care

#### Donor Sites (Liposuction Areas)

- Small liposuction incisions will be covered with **clear Op-Site dressings**.
- Keep these dressings **clean and dry** until your first post-operative visit (usually **3–4 days**).
- A small amount of pink or blood-tinged fluid on the dressings is normal.
- At your first visit, Op-Site dressings will be removed, revealing **steri-strips**, which may get wet in the shower.
- Steri-strips will naturally loosen and fall off; all tape should be removed by **2 weeks**.

#### Recipient Sites (Fat Injection Areas)

- Fat injection areas may be covered with light dressings.
- These areas generally require **minimal wound care**—simply keep clean and avoid pressure.
- **Do not** apply ice or compression directly over grafted areas, as this can reduce graft survival.

#### General Wound Care

- All stitches are internal and dissolving. If a small knot remains visible after **2 weeks**, it may be gently trimmed at skin level with clean scissors.
- If an incision drains clear/yellow fluid, wash gently with mild soap twice daily, apply **Polysporin**, and cover lightly.

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### Compression Garment

**Important:** Compression should be applied to **donor sites only**—never to grafted areas.

- Wear your compression garment continuously (**day and night**) for the first **3 weeks**, then during the day only for another **3 weeks**.
- This reduces swelling and helps smooth contour at the donor sites.
- **Do not** compress fat-grafted areas, as pressure can compromise graft survival.
- The garment may be machine-washed and hung to dry.

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### Pain & Medication

- Most patients are pleasantly surprised by how manageable their discomfort is.
- For best baseline comfort:
  - **Tylenol Extra Strength (Acetaminophen)**—every 6 hours
  - **Celebrex 200 mg**—every 12 hours for the first 3 days
- For additional relief if needed:
  - **Hydromorphone**—every 6 hours as required

# Aspect

- Tylenol + Celebrex provides excellent non-sedating pain control; you may stop all medication once comfortable.
- Because pain medication — especially narcotics — can cause constipation, consider:
  - Colace 200 mg twice daily
  - Milk of Magnesia 15–30 cc at bedtime
  - Adequate fluids + fruit and fiber intake

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## Bruising, Swelling & Fat Survival

- Bruising and swelling at both donor and recipient sites are expected and usually peak at **48–72 hours**.
- Swelling improves significantly over **4–6 weeks**, with subtle refinement continuing for several months.
- Donor sites may feel **firm or lumpy** — this is normal and improves with massage.
- Fat grafts are delicate for the first few weeks; avoid pressure, tight clothing, or sleeping on the grafted areas.
- Expect **some loss of graft volume**, as not all transferred fat survives; this is normal and accounted for during surgery.

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## Massage

### Donor Sites

- Begin gentle massage **1 week** after surgery.
- Use circular motions over the liposuction areas.
- After 2 weeks, massage can be firmer and deeper, we can recommend massage companies for you.
- Continue for **6 weeks+** using moisturizer or Bio-Oil.

### Recipient Sites

- Do **not** massage grafted areas until instructed — typically **4 weeks** post-op.
- Over-massaging too early can disrupt fat survival.

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## Cold or Heat

- Avoid **ice** on grafted areas — this can reduce circulation and compromise fat survival.
- Avoid heat (saunas, hot tubs, heating pads) for **6 weeks** as it increases swelling.

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## Activity & Positioning

- Begin light walking the day of surgery — this helps circulation and reduces clot risk.
- Avoid:
  - Strenuous activity
  - Stretching or bending that strains donor sites
  - Sleeping on the grafted areas

# Aspect

- High-impact exercise
- Resume light exercise after **3 weeks**, and more vigorous activity after **6 weeks**, unless otherwise instructed.

## Sleeping

- Sleep in positions that avoid pressure on grafted areas (e.g., on your back after BBL, on your side after breast fat grafting, etc.).
- This is important for the **first 6 weeks**.

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## Showering

- You may shower once cleared at your first post-operative visit.
- Allow clean water to run over the areas; pat dry gently.
- Avoid baths, hot tubs, or swimming for **6 weeks**.

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## Scar Care

- Once steri-strips are off (around 2 weeks) and incisions are dry and closed:
  - Begin **scar gel** twice daily with gentle massage.
  - After one week of gentle use, progress to **firmer circular massage**.
- Continue scar care for **6 months**.
- Avoid sun exposure for **4 months**; UV darkens scars permanently.
- Silicone sheeting may be used if scars remain raised after 6 weeks.

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## Emotional Recovery

It is normal to feel emotional ups and downs in the first days after surgery. Swelling and asymmetry can temporarily obscure early results.

As healing progresses, donor areas soften, grafts settle, and your final shape gradually becomes more refined. Most patients begin appreciating their results by **6-8 weeks**, with continued improvement for several months.

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## When to Contact Us

Please contact **Aspect Plastic Surgery** if you experience:

- Rapid or painful swelling
- Increasing redness or warmth
- Foul-smelling drainage
- Worsening pain
- Fever  $> 38^{\circ}\text{C}$
- Shortness of breath, calf pain, or chest pain

If urgent and our office is closed, please visit **North York General Hospital Emergency Department** or the nearest emergency facility.