



## Tummy Tuck/Abdominoplasty 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.*

### Overview

The following after-care information is designed to make your recovery safe, comfortable, and uneventful. Please read these instructions carefully before and after your procedure. If anything is unclear, contact our office — our team is here to support you every step of the way.

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### Dressings & Wound Care

- Your incision will be covered with surgical tape, glue, and a compression binder.
- Keep all dressings **clean and dry for the first 3 days**.
- **Do not shower** until after your **first follow-up appointment**, or until you are cleared if you have drains.
- Once showering begins, the tapes will loosen and fall off naturally over **2–3 weeks**.
- All sutures are internal and dissolvable. A small knot may be trimmed at skin level after 2 weeks if needed.
- The **belly button** requires no formal dressing — apply **Polysporin once daily** for 2 weeks.
- If any area drains clear or yellow fluid, gently wash with soap and water twice daily, apply Polysporin, and cover with a light dressing.
- If you have drains, follow your home-care instructions closely and keep the sites clean and covered.

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### Compression Garment

- Wear your abdominal binder **day and night for 4 weeks**, then **during the day for an additional 2 weeks**.
- As swelling decreases, the binder may need to be tightened slightly beyond the ink mark placed during surgery.
- After 6 weeks, women may transition to a soft support garment (Spanx/Bodywrap) during the day for another 6–8 weeks.
- The garment may be machine-washed; hang to dry or use low-heat only.

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### Pain & Medication

- Most patients find discomfort manageable. You may be prescribed:
  - **Tylenol Extra Strength** – every 6 hours
  - **Celebrex (Celecoxib)** – every 12 hours



- **Hydromorphone** – as needed (not more often than every 6 hours)
- Take Tylenol and Celebrex regularly; use Hydromorphone only if required.
- To prevent constipation, consider:
  - **Colace 200 mg twice daily**
  - **Milk of Magnesia 15–30 cc at bedtime**
  - Adequate fluids and fiber-rich foods

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### Diet & Hydration

- After anesthesia, begin with **clear fluids** (water, tea, apple juice).
- Progress to light foods such as soup and crackers; most patients tolerate a normal diet by the next day.
- If nausea persists, **Gravol** may be taken as directed.

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### Bruising & Arnica

- Bruising and swelling are expected and typically improve over **2–3 weeks**.
- Arnica may help reduce bruising:
  - **Oral pellets:** start 2 days before surgery, continue for 3–5 days post-op.
  - **Topical gel:** begin once gentle massage is comfortable; apply **around**, not on, the incision.
- Avoid Arnica if allergic to **daisy family** plants.

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### Fever & Infection

- A low-grade fever ( $\leq 37.8^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) on the first day is common. Deep breaths and gentle coughing can help clear the lungs.
- Contact us if you experience increasing redness, warmth, swelling, foul-smelling drainage, or worsening pain.
- For severe symptoms, visit the nearest emergency department.

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### Scar Care & Massage

- Once steri-strips are removed (typically 10–14 days), begin **gentle scar massage** twice daily with your recommended scar gel.
- After one week of gentle massage, progress to firmer circular motions.
- Continue scar care for **at least 3 months**.
- Avoid sun exposure or tanning for **4 months** to prevent permanent darkening.
- Silicone sheeting (Scar Away, Cica-Care) may be added if redness or thickness persists beyond 6 weeks.



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### Mobility & Activity

- Begin light walking the day after surgery; avoid prolonged bed rest.
- Walk slightly bent at the waist for the first week until tension improves.
- Avoid bending, twisting, heavy lifting, straining, or abdominal exercises for **6 weeks**.
- Resume light daily activity by **4–5 weeks**.
- Exercise typically resumes at **8 weeks**, starting slowly.
- Do not drive if you are taking narcotics, feel fatigued, or cannot move comfortably.

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### Emotional Recovery

It's normal to feel emotionally low in the first several days. Swelling, tightness, and temporary changes in posture can affect how you feel. This is a normal part of recovery and improves steadily as healing progresses.

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### When to Contact Us

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

- Pain not controlled by medication
- Rapid swelling or a firm, enlarging lump (possible hematoma)
- Redness, warmth, or purulent discharge at the incision
- Fever > 38°C
- Shortness of breath, calf pain, or chest pain

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

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