



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.

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.

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.

Pain & Medication

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

Aspect

- **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

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.

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.

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.

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.



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.

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.

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 $> 38^{\circ}\text{C}$
- 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.
