



Abdominoplasty Post Operative Instructions

You will be wearing a supportive garment, which you must wear 24 hours a day for the first week. You must keep dressings dry, and will be unable to shower or bath. You will need to flannel wash in the first week.

You are advised to sleep on your back during the first week, with two or three pillows. Whilst in bed, place two pillows under your knees to help alleviate any stress or tension in the abdominal muscles and wound. If you experience abdominal tension whilst sitting in a chair, raise your legs on a footstool to relieve this. Continue to wear TED stockings for a week.

If you experience any pain or discomfort you can take pain-relieving tablets as prescribed on discharge from hospital, or Paracetamol. It is advised that you take pain-relieving medication regularly. Avoid any medication containing aspirin or non-steroidal anti-inflammatories such as Ibuprofen, as these may prolong or re-commence bleeding.

You will find some limitation to your normal activity. It may be difficult to stand upright at first, but this will ease daily. Do not force yourself to stand upright. You must avoid lifting, stretching and twisting. You will need help around the house.

Should you need to cough or sneeze, support the abdominal area with your hands and apply pressure. It is important that if you need to cough you do so, even if it hurts; you will not do any damage as long as you support your abdomen.

You should be up and about and looking after yourself, moving around the house and maybe taking short walks. But do take rests; plan to have a relaxing week.

Taking regular pain-relieving tablets combined with limited mobility may mean you are prone to constipation. Take plenty of water and fruit. If you have not had your bowels open after three or four days, taking some opening medicine such as Lactulose is recommended.

Do not drive. It is important to also avoid smoking and smokers.

Please contact us if:

- You are unwell or have an increase in temperature
- Pain increases and is not relieved by painkillers.
- You have fresh bleeding other than of minor nature which is continuous.
- There is excessive swelling in the abdomen
- There is discharge from the wounds.

One week following surgery

- You will be given an appointment to see the cosmetic nurse at the hospital.
- Your dressings will be removed. Stitches around the umbilicus are trimmed. All wounds will be checked and waterproof dressings applied.
- After the first week you may remove the garment for showering, etc. but then it must be replaced. Keep your back to the shower and leave the dressing in place.

Two weeks following surgery

- You will see the nurse again for removal of stitches (or if dissolvable they will be trimmed – this may be done after one week). A light tape dressing is applied to the wounds – this can get wet. Change the tape from time to time but not every day as this will make your skin sore.
- You may now bath and shower, although it is inadvisable to soak for long periods in the bath until the wounds have had a bit longer to heal.
- Continue to wear your garment most of the time until six weeks after your surgery. After three weeks you may leave off the garment at night time but continue to wear it during the day. This you may still like to wear some kind of support garment.
- Non physical employment can now be resumed if you wish, and you may drive if comfortable to do so. Otherwise leave it a little longer.

Four weeks following surgery

- You may travel and fly.

Six to eight weeks following surgery

- Your surgeon will want to review your result. You may now begin to resume exercise such as swimming if your wounds have healed, but no sit ups/addominal exercises for three months.
- Scars may be massaged with Vit amin cream or vitamin E oil.

What is 'normal' after surgery?

You can expect a moderate amount of swelling across the abdomen for a few weeks after surgery, and it may take up to or even beyond three to six months for this to resolve. Bruising will also be noticeable in the first two to three weeks – this is normal.

It is possible to accumulate fluid in the abdomen. This is called a seroma. This can be easily drawn off by your consultant or nurse. Over activity in the early recovery period can reduce healing and increase fluid accumulation.

You may be aware of altered sensation in the abdomen, numbness and sometimes increased sensitivity. Patients can experience pins and needles or even sharp shooting sensations in the abdominal area. This is a normal response produced by the nerve endings following surgery and can take several months to return to normal.

Scars may initially improve within a month of surgery. Then they become a little pink and more noticeable, even red and lumpy temporarily before they start to settle. Scars may stay pink for several months before they fade properly, but this will vary from person to person. Protect the scars from sunlight or UV light until they have completely faded by applying a total sun block to the affected area when exposed. It is recommended that sunlight and the use of sun beds are avoided for six weeks.

You will be provided a Contact Number for the Nurses at the Hospital where your surgery was performed. Please contact the nurses for any wound care issues or concerns . If you cannot easily get hold of the nurses please leave a message with Mr Chana's office. We are always available to help and will facilitate any appointments needed.