

PATIENT INFORMATION

ABDOMINOPLASTY

Abdominoplasty facts

An abdominoplasty is a cosmetic surgical procedure used to make the abdomen thinner and firmer. It involves removing excess fat and skin from the abdomen and tightening up the muscle and fascia layers of the abdomen.

Be sure to speak to your surgeon about any blood thinners you are taking. You may need to stop them before surgery.

Stop intake of all Aspirin 7 days prior to surgery, as this product will increase bleeding and bruising during surgery.

Preparing for your surgery

- Arrange for 4-6 weeks off work. Recovery is variable, depending on your individual response to surgery, but allowing time to heal is mandatory.
- Have someone available to help with things around the house (kids, meals, shopping, etc.) for several days after surgery.
- You will need loose-fitting clothes that do not have to be pulled over your head.
- Make arrangements to have someone bring you home after surgery (usually later in the afternoon).
- Have someone available to stay with you the first night after surgery.

- Stop eating solid food at midnight the night before your surgery. You may have clear fluids (black tea, apple juice or water) only up until three hours before your scheduled arrival time. Do not chew gum or tobacco.
- You must use a special shower kit before your surgery. You can purchase this Chlorhexidine pre-operative shower kit from the Hospital's Gift Shop or a local pharmacy. You do not need a prescription. Take two pre-operative showers (one the night before your surgery and the other the morning of your surgery) following the directions inside the box.
- Bring your medication or a list of your medication for all appointments and include the dose and frequency (number of times a day you take the medication). Your pharmacy can also provide you with a medication profile.
- You will be asked to attend a pre-op clinic to be assessed by anesthesia and nursing prior to surgery.

Post-operatively

Immediately after your surgery:

- No heavy lifting (more than 5 pounds) for 6 weeks.
- Sleeping is usually most comfortable on your back, propped up on pillows or in a recliner, but you may sleep on your side if comfortable.

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- It is often more comfortable to lift and roll yourself up to a sitting position from your side to get out of bed.
- Wear your abdominal binder for 6 weeks to reduce swelling and to support the contour of your abdomen.
- The dressing is to remain dry and in place until your first home care visit. You may only sponge bath while drains are in. You may shower 48 hours after drains come out. The abdominal binder may be removed for showering and for washing.
- You may eat a regular diet.
- Take all medication as prescribed.
- This may be supplemented by over the pain medicine. Talk to your pharmacist to see what is right for you. Advise your surgeon if the pain medicine makes you nauseous or constipated.
- You may use over-the-counter stool softeners, such as Colace, as well as Gravol for nausea.
- You will have one or two drains in place that require emptying and you will need to record drainage every 8 hours or when plastic bulb is full. You will be instructed on this process prior to leaving the hospital. Bring all drain output records to the next appointment with your surgeon.
- Driving is allowed once you are off narcotic pain medication for 24 hours **and** can move comfortably enough to react to any driving situation (check with physician if you are unsure).

Please phone the surgeon's office or call Telehealth Ontario as soon as possible if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- A rapid increase in pain, swelling and firmness, with severe bruising
- Difficulty breathing, chest pain, palpitations or shortness of breath
- Vomiting after the first 24-48 hours
- High fevers above 38.5oC or 101.5oF
- Pain and swelling in one, or both, legs
- Inability to urinate

The healing process involves:

- Pain, bruising, and mild swelling. These are expected after surgery.
- Low grade temperature is often seen early after surgery (low grade temperature under 38o C).
- Dry gauze may be placed over the incision if a small amount of drainage persists. If you have drains, fluids may occasionally leak around rather than through the drains.
- All stitches are dissolvable, except for the drain stitches. The drain stitches will be removed at the same time as the drain, approximately two weeks after surgery. Creams and lotions over the scars are not to be used unless otherwise directed.
- Normal activities may be resumed as tolerated by 6 weeks after surgery.
- Avoid tanning over healing incisions.

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