

Body Lift Post Operative Instructions

- **POSITION:** Because Circumferential Body Lipectomy involves tightening of the abdominal muscles coupled with removal of excess skin of the abdomen, hips, buttocks and back, you will experience some difficulty sitting for a week or two or even longer. The tightness will gradually disappear as you heal and progressively use your body muscles for the activities of daily living. Please make no special attempts to stretch or bend down during the first 2-3 weeks of healing.

You must change your position and walk around the house every few hours to reduce the danger of blood clots.

- **DRESSINGS:** We will place an elastic abdominal binder around your abdomen and hips after surgery to provide some gentle pressure, to give you stability, and to reduce swelling. The compression garment or binder is required to be worn continuously for 4-6 weeks following surgery (except when laundering, bathing, etc.) unless otherwise instructed by Dr. Meeks. If it feels too tight or causes pain, loosen it periodically or call the office at (360) 479-4370. We do not want the binder to interfere with circulation to the skin, which would cause blistering or skin loss!

Some patients choose to wear the garment for another several months after surgery. Let your own comfort and the amount of swelling you experience guide you. We want you as comfortable as possible without swelling.

- **POST-SURGICAL TAPE AND SUTURES:** Dr. Meeks will place a moist tape around the incision line. Do not remove this yourself. Your nurse will remove and replace it for you during the first month of healing. There may be sutures around the belly button and these will be removed in 5-7 days after surgery. If there are any other sutures to be removed, this would occur 14-28 days after surgery.
- **SHOWERING AND BATHING:** You may shower 2 days after surgery once all of the dressings have been removed.
- **DRAINS:** Dr. Meeks will place several drains into the surgical area at the time of surgery. These drains evacuate the fluid that accumulates after surgery and enable you to heal faster. When the drain is first put in place, the bulb at the end of each tube will be compressed to create gentle suction. As the fluid collects in the bulb, it will expand.

Drain care: Secure the bulb of the drain to your clothing or the abdominal binder with a safety pin. Whenever the bulb fills or expands 50% or more, empty the bulb by opening the plug at the top and pouring out the contents. Do not attempt to remove the bulb from the tubing. Squeeze the bulb to recompress it, and put the plug back into the hole at the top in order to maintain the vacuum. If the bulb fills rapidly after emptying at, or you need to empty it more than 3 times a day, please call us. Dr. Meeks or a nurse will remove the drains 1-3 weeks after surgery, when the fluid begins to turn a clear straw color and/or the amount of drainage diminishes. You may shower the day after your drains are removed. Dr. Meeks, however, may give you permission to shower prior to drain removal.

- **ACTIVITIES:** Body lifts are probably the most uncomfortable operation we do. You will experience some pain for 10-20 days and will not feel like resuming sports or heavy exercise for at least 6 weeks. After the first 2 weeks, you may resume moderate walks for as long as is tolerable. Too much initial activity can prolong swelling.
- **EXPOSURE TO SUNLIGHT:** We recommend that you protect your scars from the sun for a year after surgery. Even through a bathing suit, a good deal of sunlight can reach the skin and cause damage. Wear sunscreen with a skin-protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 when out in sunny weather.

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SPECIFIC AS YOU HEAL INFORMATION

- **TIGHTNESS:** Your abdomen, hips, buttocks and back will feel tight for a month or longer.
- **HEALING AND SENSORY NERVES:** Usually, the skin around the incisions remains partially or completely numb for several months or longer. Tingling, burning, or shooting pains indicate regeneration of small sensory nerves. This feeling will disappear with time and is not cause for alarm. It may take as long as 2 years for sensation in your abdomen to be restored completely.
- **ACTIVITIES:** If your job keeps you sedentary, you may plan on returning to work in 14 days, with the understanding that you will still have discomfort with motion. Please discuss this with Dr. Meeks and the nursing staff. Here again, swelling may indicate too much activity. Do not plan on resuming aerobic or strenuous activity for about 5-6 weeks after surgery. Let your body tell you what it can and can't do and please check with us before returning to exercise or strenuous activities.
- **FEELING OF FULLNESS:** You may pleasantly find that you feel full sooner than normal when you begin to eat regular meals.