

LOWER BODY LIFT - POSTOPERATIVE INFORMATION

You have just had a delicate operation on your abdomen, hips, waist, back, and thighs. The following information is intended for your well being and will assist you during your recovery period. It is not a substitute for my personal attention or interest in you. In fact, each operation receives special and individual thought. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Following surgery, you will go to the post-anesthesia care unit. A dressing and compression garment will be in place. Following your operation, your tissues will react with swelling and a feeling of tightness, which will be responsible for discomfort. In addition, the abdominoplasty itself is responsible for this sensation, and it will require time, approximately six months, for this to resolve.

The swelling and bruising will leave in time but may settle towards your feet due to gravity -- this is expected. The majority of the bruising and most of the swelling does resolve within a few weeks. However, the healing process does take time. It generally requires six months and possibly up to one year for the healing process. Please be patient. How quickly your swelling and discoloration subsides depends on your health and healing quality, as well as a quiet, careful and calm convalescence.

To safeguard the result you have gained, it is recommended that you avoid excessive gain or loss of weight. In addition, ultraviolet exposure from the sun is very damaging to the skin. It is advisable to use a #35 sunscreen on a regular basis. Should you plan a day or more in the sun, a #45 sun block or greater is a good idea. This is certainly advisable for at least the first year following surgery. You may use moisturizers and creams as desired.

Please have someone assist you to and from your car on the way home and fasten your seat belt. It is advisable that you not be left unattended and have a responsible person stay with you for the first 24 hours following your surgery. If you have stayed overnight in the hospital, the nursing staff will look after you.

You should also have someone assist you to the bathroom, as sometimes there is weakness or lightheadedness following surgery. **I do want you to get up and move about as much as you can.** Early movement after surgery helps to prevent problems like blood clots in the legs and problems with the lungs.

Diet:

Begin with liquids and light foods Jell-O, crackers, soups, etc., gradually progressing to a normal diet. Drink plenty of liquids for the first 48 hours.

Daily activities:

Do not make any important decisions or sign any important papers in the 24 hours following surgery, or anytime while taking pain medication.

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Please wear your compression garment for approximately 12 weeks. It will help to reduce the swelling from surgery and should allow for more rapid resolution of swelling over time. **You may shower in 48 hours.** Use regular soap and water and just pat the tape (if present) dry afterwards. You may change the gauze over the incisions, if any is present. The gauze only needs to be replaced if it's needed to keep your clothing clean. Please leave the tape (if present) in place. Once you have had your drains pulled and the incisions have totally closed, you may take a warm Epsom salt bath. Epsom salt baths can help with swelling and pain. Call the office if you have any questions about whether a bath is appropriate for you.

You may drive when you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication (percocet, vicodin, etc) AND you feel like you are able to react appropriately in traffic. For most people, this is sometime in the first 2 weeks after surgery.

Post-operative garments:

You should purchase one or more compression garments prior to surgery. You will be given information on where obtain these garments at your preoperative visit. The key with all of these is to have a compression garment that reaches from the area just under your bra (or chest) to the lower part of your hips.

Exercise:

Please perform no straining, lifting greater than 10 pounds, or strenuous abdominal exercising for approximately six weeks. You can begin lighter exercise whenever you feel like it. Just use common sense—stop or change what you're doing if it hurts.

Swelling:

You will have fluctuations in swelling for months after your surgery, meaning you'll have "good swelling days" and "bad swelling days" off and on as you heal. This is normal and will eventually stop over time.

Drains:

Drainage tubes are normally placed at the time of abdominoplasty. These drains will remain in place until the drainage subsides. It is important to empty the drains and record the amount, every day or more frequently as needed.

Sleeping:

Many of my patients have found it helpful to sleep in a recliner for the few days after surgery. Others have used a "wedge" pillow under their shoulder and another under their knees, so that they are in a flexed position, without too much tension on the abdomen or the back. You may sleep however you find comfort.

Massage:

Massage is a very useful therapy after liposuction. You can begin lymphatic drainage massage as soon as a week after surgery. You may see any licensed massage therapist for this treatment.

Medications:

Have your prescriptions filled before your surgery date. Use prescription medications for relief of pain as directed. These medications can cause drowsiness, tiredness or loss of balance and may affect your vision; thus, do not drive or operate machinery while taking these medications. You should also be careful when walking and with day-to-day activities. You may resume your daily prescription medications unless told otherwise.

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You may use Tylenol if you wish. However vicodin and percocet as well as other pain medications contain Tylenol. Thus, do not take these medications and Tylenol together as you may be taking too much Tylenol. Too much Tylenol can cause liver damage and other problems. If you are unsure about a particular medication, please call.

If you have questions or a problem:

Please call if you have any problem or question that concerns you. You can call the office at 360-479-4370 anytime. If you need immediate attention, or for some reason you are unable to contact me, go to the emergency room nearest your home.

Some reasons to call:

- Fever greater than 101.5 F taken with a thermometer
- Pain not relieved by medication
- Severe pain
- Redness, warmth, drainage or odor from the operative site
- Excessive Bleeding (small amounts of oozing may be expected)
- Persistent nausea and vomiting
- If you have ANY questions or concerns regarding your condition or surgery

Follow-up appointment:

You should already have your first postoperative appointment made for one day and then one week after your surgery date. If you aren't sure, please call the office to confirm your date and time.