

Abdominal Wall Reconstruction - Post-Operative Instructions

General Instructions

- Someone must drive you home after surgery and help you at home for 1-2 days.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Follow balanced diet with high protein and fluid intake.
- Decreased activity may promote constipation, so you may want to add more raw fruit to your diet and be sure to increase fluid intake.
- Take pain medication as prescribed. Do not take aspirin or any products containing aspirin unless approved by your surgeon.
- Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medications.
- Do not smoke, as smoking delays healing and increases the risk of complications.

Activities

- Start walking as soon as possible, this helps to reduce swelling and lowers the chance of blood clots
- Do not drive until you are no longer taking any pain medications (narcotics).
- Do not drive until you have full range of motion with your arms.
- Refrain from vigorous activity for 2-6 weeks. Increase activity gradually as tolerated.
- Avoid lifting anything over 5 pounds for 2 weeks.
- Resume social and employment activities in about 2 weeks (if not too strenuous).
- Wear your compression garment as directed for 4 to 6 weeks post op.

Incision Care

- Leave binder and dressings on x 72 hours. Drainage and oozing onto the dressings and binder is expected.
- You may remove binder and dressing to shower 72 hours after surgery. You may wash the abdominal binder, replace and wear for 23 out of 24 hours in your day, including when you sleep.
- Keep steri-strips on, allow to fall off on their own in 2 to 3 weeks. Oozing and some bleeding through the steri-strips can occur. You may pad the incisions with gauze for comfort.
 - After steri-strips are removed, for optimal scar healing use silicone strips over incisions (you can order these from amazon or pick up at a local drug store). You can alternatively use vitamin-e lotion, tea tree oil, or cocoa butter.
- Avoid exposing scars to sun for at least 3 months.
- Always use a strong sunblock, if sun exposure is unavoidable (SPF 30 or greater). We recommend sunscreen that contains zinc oxide.
- No tub soaking/swimming for 1 month.
- If your abdominal skin is exceedingly dry after surgery, you can apply a moisturizer several times a day, but be sure to keep the suture area dry.

What to Expect

- Incisions will be taped with steri-strips. Leave these in place until they fall off themselves or need to be changed. You can expect drainage onto the steri-strips.
- Expect moderate drainage on your initial dressing, it is not uncommon for this to seep onto the binder/dressings/compression garment.
- Maximum discomfort will occur the first few days after surgery.
- You may experience temporary soreness, bruising, swelling and tightness in the abdomen as well as discomfort in the incision area.
- You may not have sensation in abdomen and liposuction areas. This usually returns as your body recovers and can take up to 18 months to 2 years.
- You may have random, shooting pains and itching throughout your abdomen/back/flanks and along incisions for a few months. This is part of the normal healing process.

Appearance

- Most of the discoloration and swelling will subside in 2-4 weeks.
- Your abdomen will feel firm.
- Scars may be red and angry looking for 6 months. In time, these usually soften and fade.

Follow-Up Care

- Follow up within 3 to 5 days of surgery.
- Drains will be removed within 10 to 14 days or once under 30cc in a 24 hour period
- All sutures will be dissolvable.

When to Call

- If you have severe or increased pain not relieved by medication.
- If you have any side effects to medications; such as, rash, nausea, headache, vomiting.
- If you have an oral temperature over 100.4 degrees.
- If you have increased swelling or bruising.
- If swelling and redness persist after a few days.
- If you have increased redness along the incision.
- If you have any yellowish or greenish drainage from the incisions or notice a foul odor.
- If you have bleeding from the incisions that is difficult to control with light pressure.
- If you have loss of feeling or motion.

For Medical Questions, Please contact:

- Katie Leemaster PA-C at katie@districtps.com or Dr. Praful Ramineni at doc@districtps.com
- (202) 742-3999, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Please Email Jackie at jackie@districtps.com to set up your post op appointment for Monday/Thursday
 _____ (please give preference of morning or afternoon post op appointment).