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Postoperative Instructions for Abdominoplasty

INSTRUCTIONS

- Have someone drive you home after surgery and help you at home for 1-2 days.
- Follow balanced diet.
- Decreased activity may promote constipation, add fruit to your diet and increase fluid intake.
- Take pain medication as prescribed. Do not take aspirin or any products containing aspirin.
- Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medications.
- No alcohol for 3 weeks
- Do not smoke, as smoking delays healing and increases the risk of complications.

ACTIVITIES

- Start walking as soon as possible, as 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.
- Avoid vigorous exercise and activities are restricted for 6 weeks. No heavy lifting, pulling or pushing.
- Avoid straining of abdominal muscles.
- Return to work in 3-6 weeks (Depends on job).

INCISION CARE

- Keep surgical tapes in place for at least two weeks.
- Keep incisions dry all the time.
- No shower or tub soaking while drains are in place. You may shower 48 hours after removal of drains.
- May wear soft support underpants for comfort, may pad incision with dressings for comfort.
- Sleep on your back with pillow under knees and head elevated on 2 pillows for at least two weeks.
- Avoid exposing scars to sun for at least 12 months.
- Always use sunblock, if sun exposure is unavoidable (SPF 30 or greater).

WHAT TO EXPECT

- You may experience temporary pain, soreness, or numbness of the abdomen around the incision.
- You may have bruising and swelling. The majority of bruising and swelling will subside in 6-8 weeks.
- You will walk slightly bent forward and gradually return to normal posture over 2-3 weeks.
- Scars will be reddened for few weeks. They will fade and soften over time, it takes up to 12 months for the scars to mature.
- You may feel tired for several weeks.

FOLLOW-UP CARE

- The drains are removed when less than 30 ml for 24 hours, usually within 1-2 weeks.
- You need to wear the abdominal binder for at least 6 weeks.

WHEN TO CALL

- If you have sudden painful swelling or bruising.
 - If swelling and redness persist after a few days.
 - If you have increased redness along the incision.
 - If you have severe or increased pain not relieved by medication.
 - 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 severe pain and swelling to one leg or unusual shortness of breath.