

# Breckenridge Surgery Center

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## Abdominoplasty Pre-op and Post-Op Instructions

### Pre-Op Instructions:

- \* Stop all aspirin products, female hormones (including BCP's) and herbal medications 10 days prior to surgery. Vitamins in standard doses can be continued through the date of surgery.
- \* Wash the surgical areas daily with the antibacterial soap (Hibiclens) starting 3 days prior to the surgery (however do not use on the face: body only)
- \* Start Colace (the stool softener) the day prior to surgery.
- \* Transderm Scopolamine is to be applied behind the ear the night before surgery to help prevent nausea and vomiting. Wash hands immediately after handling. The patch may be removed after surgery when you are not having any nausea: it will make the mouth dry and can rarely make it difficult to read (blurry vision).
- \* Emend 40 mg is to be taken the morning of surgery with a small sip of water.

This tablet is synergistic with the Transderm Scopolamine in reducing the risk of nausea after surgery. These two medications, Transderm Scopolamine and Emend are optional medications, not mandatory, but are written to help reduce the chance of nausea and vomiting after surgery. Despite the use of these two medications some patients will still have some nausea and additional medications such as Phenergan or Zofran can be prescribed.

### Post-Op Instructions:

- \* You **MUST** have someone available to drive you home after surgery.
- \* It is important that you have another responsible person available to assist you for the first 2-3 days after surgery.
- \* It is extremely important that you take short walks every 1-2 hours in your home up until bed-time to prevent clots in the legs. We want this to start THE NIGHT OF SURGERY!
- \* With every walk, we will want you to use the incentive spirometry to expand the lungs (hence our expression "WALK AND BREATHE EVERY HOUR" after surgery).
- \* Most abdominoplasty patients will have a catheter in their bladder. This can cause irritation or burning when you urinate the first 24 hours. This is normal. However, if you cannot urinate for 8 hours after getting home, you will need to go to the nearest Emergency Room to have a catheter placed. This is rare.
- \* You will be provided with a strong pain medication (Such as Percocet or Norco) to help manage the post-operative pain. Most patients do require this medication for the first week. Many require as much as 8 tablets per 24 hours the first 3 days, but we do not want you ever taking more than 8 tabs per/24 hours. There is acetaminophen in the pain medication which is toxic to the liver if you have more than 8 tablets per 24 hours. We would like you to taper this medication starting no later than 5-7 days after surgery to perhaps one tab every 4-6 hours. This medication will cause constipation and the best treatment for the constipation from this medication is to get off the medication as soon as possible.
- \* You can also use a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication such as advil (Ibuprofen) or alleve (Naaprosyn) to help with pain. Advil can be taken 400-600mg three times a day with food and the alleve can be taken 440 mg twice daily with food. **DO NOT TAKE ADDITIONAL TYLENOL BECAUSE THERE IS COMMONLY TYLENOL IN YOUR PAIN MEDICATION.** Also the medications should not be taken if there is a history of intestinal ulcers or significant reflux disease.

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- \* In addition, Xarelto (pills) or Lovenox (injections) may be provided to you to reduce the chance of Deep-Vein Thrombosis (blood clot in the leg) and Pulmonary Embolism (blood clot in the lung). Abdominoplasties have a higher risk of DVT's (Deep Vein Thrombosis) than other procedures and hence our strong commitment to prevention. These medications will start the day after surgery and follow the instructions on the prescription. **Stop this medication for any unusual bleeding, oozing from the incision or dizziness with upright posture and contact your physician.**
- \* Slight temperature elevation during the first 48 hours after surgery is a natural consequence of the body's reaction to surgical trauma. There is Tylenol in your pain medication that should control mild fevers. If the temperature is over 101, most of the time the cause is not walking or doing the incentive spirometry breathing treatments enough. Call us if your temperature stays higher than 101.5 for more than 8 hours and does not respond to walking, deep breathing and coughing.

## Activities:

- \* Sleep with head slightly elevated and pillows under your knees to decrease tension on your abdominal incision. Some patients choose to sleep in a recliner for the first several nights.
- \* You may shower the day after surgery. Take all the dressings off but not the steri-strips right on the skin, wash all areas with soap and water and then pat dry upon exiting the shower. If you have drains, it is helpful to place the drain tubes on a lanyard or string around the neck so both hands are free in the shower. No bathtub full immersion for several weeks after the procedure. After patting dry the incisions, new gauze or pads can be applied and the netting or tape may be used to keep the pads in place. Dressings can be discontinued after there is no drainage for several days (commonly 5-7 days after the procedure).
- \* Remember to take brief walks every hour during the day, this will help to reduce swelling and decreases the change of blood clots.
- \* If you have drain tubes, please refer to the drain tube care sheet that was sent home with you or alternatively is on the Regional Plastic Surgery Web-site and follow those directions carefully.
- \* You will walk slightly bent forward and gradually return to normal posture over the first 2 weeks
- \* Do not drive within 6 hours of taking pain medication. Most patients after a tummy tuck do not feel like driving for the first week.
- \* No lifting greater than 20 pounds for the first 8 weeks.
- \* You may resume "normal activities," such as, shopping and light chores as tolerated, usually after the first 4-10 days. An office job can commonly be resumed 10 days after surgery. Jobs which require heavy lifting (such as a hospital nurse) will commonly require 6 weeks of off time.
- \* Avoid straining of the abdominal muscles for 8 weeks. Strenuous exercise or abdominal core exercises should be avoided. Until 8 weeks post op and then start gradually.
- \* Low impact cardio can be resumed after a week.
- \* Sexual activity can be resumed whenever comfortable so long as there is no weight or direct pressure placed on the abdominal incision. Due to the discomfort with the procedure, many patients do not resume sexual activity for 2 or more weeks after the procedure. This is entirely up to the individual patient.
- \* it is common not to have a bowel movement for 2-5 days after an abdominoplasty due to the surgery and slower motility of the GI system from the medication. It is important to drink plenty of water, take the Colace and taper the pain medication as soon as possible. Occasionally a stronger medication for constipation such as fleets enema or dulcolax suppositories may be necessary.

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## What to Expect:

- \* If you had flank or waist liposuction with your abdominoplasty, commonly there is quite a bit of drainage of blood tinged fluid from the liposuction incisions. This is normal for 24 hours and sometimes for 72 hours. The fluid that is draining out is usually the fluid placed into the fatty tissue to make it easier to remove. It is best to have plastic protectors for the bed, couch or recliner where you plan to sleep..
- \* The scar will extend from near one hipbone to the other (low on the abdomen), and an incision around the belly button. The scar will appear raised like a speed bump, the speed bump at the incision line prevents tension on the scar as it heals, as the scar flattens out you will have a thin scar across the abdomen. The scar will be red and raised for six months. After that, it will fade and soften. It can take up to a full year for a scar to remodel itself.
- \* All incisions will be covered with steri strips, glue or ointment.
- \* Your first appointment after surgery will be around 10-14 days.
- \* It is normal to experience pulling or pinching sensation for weeks and sometimes months after surgery.
- \* Swelling is to be expected for several weeks. The abdominal swelling and the waist swelling if you have liposuction will take three months to resolve.

## WHAT TO CALL YOUR PHYSICIAN FOR:

- \* Most questions and concerns about pain, swelling and about final results are easiest to answer at the time of your routine follow up visits. The following are reasons to call prior to a scheduled appointment:
- \* Persistent fever over 101 Fahrenheit for 8 hours that does not respond to walking, deep breathing or coughing.
- \* Chest pain or significant shortness of breath
- \* Increasing redness along the incision that is more than ½ an inch (a small rim of redness around the incision is normal), especially if the redness is expanding or extending over time.
- \* Drainage from the incision that is purulent (pus). Also, if the skin next to the incision is turning very dark or black.
- \* if you are unable to urinate 8 hours after getting home from the procedure (this will require a trip to the emergency room, unfortunately, but is rare).
- \* A significant new opening in the incision (over ½ an inch). Small openings along the incision such as a mm or so are common and are not emergencies.