



Abdominoplasty (Tummy Tuck) Discharge Instructions

Surgical Dressings

- Your Dressing consists of xeroform (yellow, sticky gauze), ABD pads and an abdominal binder / girdle.

Showering

- You may remove all dressings and shower in 48 hours.
- The drains are covered with white tape which is designed to get wet and should be left in place until the drains are ready to be removed.

Dressings / Surgical Site Care

- You may remove the xeroform and ABD pads after 48 hours.
- You may find it helpful to go to the drugstore and purchase MaxiPads to place over the incisions. There is no need to purchase sterile gauze as nothing will be sterile after the initial dressings are removed.
- Place gauze or MaxiPads over the incisions before replacing the binder as this will prevent rubbing / irritation of the incision.
- You will have drains in place. Please follow the instructions provided for drain care. You may shower with the drains in place.

Abdominal Binder / Girdle

- Wear the abdominal binder for at least 6 weeks after surgery as this will help reduce swelling, control pain, and “mold” the surgical contours.
- You may remove the binder for short periods of time or when sleeping starting 2 weeks after surgery.
- Even after the first 2 weeks, wear the binder as much as tolerated, but at a minimum when up and about or during periods of increased activity.

Sleeping



- Sleep on your back for the first 2 weeks following surgery.
- You should sleep in a recliner or in bed with a few pillows behind your back so as to flex your waist 20-30 degrees. This will reduce tension across your incision.

Driving

- Absolutely no driving while taking narcotic pain medications.
- It is ok to start driving for short distances 2-3 weeks following surgery (as long as not taking narcotic pain medications).
- Activity, including driving, may stir up fluid in the tissues for at least 3 weeks following surgery, therefore minimize driving as much as possible during this time.

Activity

- You may be up and around your home the day of surgery as much as possible.
- It is ok to do your activities of daily living immediately following surgery (going to the bathroom, brushing your hair/teeth, lifting the tv remote etc.)
- Do not lift anything greater than 10-15 pounds for the first 2 weeks following surgery.
- Walk slightly bent over, (waist flexed at 20-30 degrees) for the first 7-10 days following surgery to keep tension off the incision site.
- Minimize contact with pets for at least 2 weeks following surgery as they can be a source of infection.
- Hug a pillow when coughing or sneezing to provide support and help with discomfort.

Activity Rules of Thumb

- If it hurts, DON'T DO IT.
- If lifting something with just the elbows is too heavy, then it should not be lifted.
- Mild stretching / pulling sensations are normal for at least the first 8 weeks after surgery, and activities that produce these sensations should not necessarily be avoided.

Diet

- Eat as tolerated following surgery, but TAKE IT SLOW.
- It is best to start with liquids to see if they are tolerated (no nausea) before starting solid foods.

Pain Medication

Take your pain medications as directed:



1. Tylenol (acetaminophen)

- Should be taken every 6-8 hours consistently for at least the first 2 weeks after surgery.
- Maximum daily dose is 4000mg / day.
- Tylenol helps to augment other pain medications with little to no side effects.

2. Oxycodone (or other narcotic)

- Tends to make people sleepy and should be taken at night before you go to bed to keep your pain under control while you sleep. It may also be taken throughout the day as needed.
- This should be the first medication to be weaned off as it can cause many side effects, most notably constipation.

3. Ibuprofen (NSAID)

- Anti-Inflammatory medication that should be started no sooner than 48 hours after surgery unless approved by Dr. Gougoutas.
- After 48 hours, post-surgical pain becomes mostly inflammatory in nature and anti-inflammatory drugs tend to work better than narcotics in most cases.
- Maximal dosage is 600-800mg every 8 hours.

4. Meloxicam (NSAID)

- If you were prescribed meloxicam this should be taken once a day starting the morning after surgery, generally for 1 week.
- Meloxicam is also an NSAID and SHOULD NOT be taken with Ibuprofen.

What to Expect After Surgery:

- You will be sore, and in some pain following surgery.
- Your pain should be manageable with the pain medications provided- only take these medications as prescribed.
- Inflammation / swelling / bruising typically peaks 36-48 hours following surgery, and thus pain can increase for up to 3 days following surgery, after which time it should start to gradually subside every day.
- Swelling, tightness and numbness are normal sensations for the first several weeks, at least, after surgery. This will subside with time as you heal.
- You may feel more tired and emotional for the first 7-10 days following surgery. This is a normal response to surgery and is not a cause for concern.
- Some minor bleeding may occur through the bandages or around the drain site for the first 24 hours after surgery.

What To Look For



1. Check for excessive bleeding

- A small amount of spotting through the bandages is generally normal, particularly with liposuction.
- Any spotting through the bandages that continues to increase in size warrants a phone call.
- Rule of thumb: If you are concerned, call Dr. Gougoutas.

2. Check for infection

- Infection very rarely develops before 7-10 days post-operatively.
- A low-grade fever ($<101.5^{\circ}\text{F}$) is very common after surgery and is not a cause for concern. Fevers greater than 101.5°F warrant a phone call / MyChart message for possible evaluation.
- Increasing redness around the incision sites also warrants a phone call / MyChart message for possible evaluation.
- Feeling suddenly worse after a steady improvement in your post-operative course also warrants a phone call / MyChart message for possible evaluation.
- Drainage from an incision more than 3-4 days after surgery warrants a phone call / MyChart message for possible evaluation.

Anesthesia Discharge Instructions

The medications used during your surgery will linger in your system for at least 24 hours. Therefore, during this time:

- **DO NOT** drive a car, operate machinery, or power tools
- **DO NOT** drink alcohol, take tranquilizers, or sleeping pills
- **DO NOT** make legally binding decisions

A responsible adult should transport you (or accompany you in ride share / taxi) to your recovery location (*home, a friend's house, hotel etc.*) and **remain with you** for the first 24 hours.

If you are from out of town and staying at a nearby hotel, you **MUST** use a vehicle to transport you to your hotel regardless of distance. You may not walk.

Post-Surgery RN Call

A nurse from the surgery center will call you the following business day to see how you are progressing. If you have problems or concerns, please call our office at any time (206) 860-5582. **If you have an urgent issue, please do not use MyChart messaging, as this is not monitored outside of our regular business hours.**



What to Do If the Office Is Closed

Prior to calling, please refer to your discharge instructions

If your question cannot be answered in your discharge instructions, or cannot wait until our office is open, please call (206) 860-5582. You will reach an operator who will page Dr. Gougoutas.

Drains will not be removed over the weekend. If you have a drain in place, and the amount goes below 30cc over the weekend, please call on Monday to make an appointment for drain removal.

In case of a medical emergency – call 911 immediately