

## **Post Operative Instructions:**

### **Abdominoplasty (Tummy tuck)**

- Try and arrange to have either a friend or family member to pick you up and to stay with you for the first 24-48 hours in order to help you get settled in around the house.
- Everyone recovers from their anaesthetic differently. Some people feel no side effects while others are more noticeably affected, feeling tired and even sick for the first couple of days. Eat lightly with small meals throughout the day to minimise sickness. If necessary, cut food into small bite-sized pieces to facilitate chewing and digestion. Salty foods can contribute to fluid retention and swelling so limit these in the first 7-10 days. *In order to avoid constipation, eat plenty of fresh vegetables and dried fruits.* Overall, try to eat a balanced diet to ensure your body is getting all the important nutrients it needs in the immediate postoperative healing period.
- Drink plenty of fluids in the form of water and fresh juices, in the first few days after surgery. Avoid caffeine and carbonated drinks in the first few days. Dairy products in the first 72 hours after surgery can upset your stomach and make you feel sick and therefore it would be sensible to keep these to a minimum.
- Do wear comfortable front opening and loose clothing at night and in the day, that do not need to be pulled over your head. Due to the fact that there is likely to be some degree of soiling or staining from the suture sites, try to use old bed and pillow linen.
- Should you experience any pain, you may take one or two pain relieving tablets (such as paracetamol or distalgesics) as required up to 4hourly. **DO NOT TAKE ASPIRIN OR PRODUCTS CONTAINING ASPIRIN** as well as any of the other preparations mentioned in the *DO'S & DON'T'S* section. These products will prolong or recommence bleeding.
- Continue to avoid smoking and alcohol and avoid medications and mixtures mentioned in the *DO'S & DON'T* section of your information booklet for two weeks after surgery. These tend to recommence or prolong bleeding. Also do not allow anyone to smoke in your presence, either.
- Remember to recommence any regular medication that you take (i.e. blood pressure tablets) as soon as you are able to drink, unless specifically instructed not to.
- You should abstain from alcohol for one week after surgery.
- You may drive after one week.
- Drink at least 8 glasses of water daily during the first 48 hours after surgery.

- The following day after surgery, drains placed beneath the skin will usually be removed. Your wounds will be redressed and a support garment will be placed over the dressing. Please leave these in place (unless instructed otherwise). All your stitches will be dissolvable and therefore will not need to be removed. You will be asked to attend for a follow-up appointment at about 1 week to remove the dressings and check the wound.
- You may shower after your dressings are removed at about 1 week. In the interim you are allowed to wet wash around your dressings. Bathing is allowed after 4 weeks, when the wounds have healed and all dressings are removed.
- Bruising and initial swelling are variable but can last up to three or four weeks. However it is important to remember that subtle (and sometimes not so subtle!) swelling will take up to 6 months to fully settle. Please wear your support garment for 4-6 weeks following surgery, taking it off for only short periods. This will help limit any swelling that may arise. Despite this however, it is still possible to develop some fluid build up beneath the skin which occasionally needs to be drained with a needle. This will be assessed at your follow up visit.
- Local massage to the scar is usually begun at around 4 weeks. Use your normal body lotion creams to facilitate this action. A silicone gel sheet will be provided for you and which will help the appearance of the scars. You will be instructed in how to use this. Furthermore products such as Bio-Oil (available from Boots *chemists*) can also be used to improve the quality of the ensuing scars.
- Moderate your activity during the first two weeks doing only light duties. Avoid excessive straining or use of your abdominal muscles. You may feel more comfortable walking slightly bent over during the first couple of days. Following this time, gradually build up to a complete upright stance. Slowly increase your physical activity after 3 weeks. Upper body and arm exercises can commence 4 weeks postoperatively while lower body exercise can commence 6 weeks postoperatively.
- You should contact us if any of the following occur:
  - a) Fever greater than 100 Fahrenheit or 38.5 Celsius.
  - b) Pain not relieved by two pain relieving tablets.
  - c) Significant swelling of the abdomen.
  - d) Significant discharge from the wound sites after 72 hours.

**REMEMBER IF IN DOUBT, PLEASE ASK BY EITHER CALLING THE OFFICE DURING OFFICE HOURS MON-FRI ON 0207 432 8727 OR OUT OF HOURS IN AN EMERGENCY PLEASE CALL THE PRACTICE NURSE ON: 07944 600 215. PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE AND YOUR CALL WILL BE RETURNED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.**