



ABDOMINOPLASTY

Post Operative Advice Sheet

You should arrange for someone to drive you home from hospital. You will experience mild discomfort after your surgery and it is recommended that you take one or two pain relieving tablets (such as Paracetamol) on a regular basis for the first week or so.

DO NOT TAKE ASPIRIN OR ANY PRODUCTS CONTAINING ASPIRIN as this may prolong or cause bleeding in the early post operative period.

There maybe some bruising following surgery, but this should settle in the first two or three weeks.

You will notice the skin of your tummy as well as sometimes and occasionally the skin of your thighs may be numb or tingling. This area of impaired sensation will gradually improve over the coming months. You should therefore take extreme precautions and avoid using any hotwater bottles as this can lead to a full thickness burn to these numb areas without you realising it.

Initially mobilisation is slow and we will ask you to walk with a slight stoop to take tension off the suture line/incision. If a lot of skin is removed from your tummy wall it may take at least a week before you can stand up right fully.

Sometimes you will find it more comfortable when you lie in bed to have your legs supported on a couple of pillows beneath the knees.

Though you will need rest in the first week post operatively it is very important in this early period that you set yourself a daily walking exercise programme.

It is important that you do not just lie in bed for protracted periods to avoid a deep vein thrombosis or pulmonary embolus (DVT or PE). You will have been provided with a pressure garment or elasticated dressings to gently compress your abdominal wall.

You will be provided with an elasticated corset and you should wear this day and night for the first month. You should avoid getting the wounds or dressings wet for the first week.

For your surgery, buried dissolvable stitches have been used. These normally dissolve spontaneously in the first four to eight weeks. Around the tummy button (umbilicus) removable stitches are often used as they give the best scar at this site.

At one week post operatively, you will be seen by the nurse in the Dressing Clinic who will remove the dressing and inspect your wound.

Once the wounds are clean and dry you will be advised when you can recommence bathing. It is very important in the early period after your operation that you move around your home as much as possible, setting yourself a daily walking programme and not lying in bed for protracted periods, however, you should abstain from all exercise from for at least three weeks. For the first week post operatively you should not do household chores.

In the second post operative week you can start light household duties. You may commence very gentle exercises from 2-3 weeks post operatively and are ready to return to gym activities from week six working within the limits of comfort. You may commence driving once you feel confident to undertake an emergency stop, until you feel confident to do this you should refrain from driving.

I would have advised that it is important to stop smoking prior to your operation in order to reduce the risks of complications.

Following surgery, the type of job that you do determines when you can return to work. If you mainly confined to deskwork, you may feel able to return to work after three weeks. More physical occupations may require five to six weeks of recuperation before you feel able to return to work.

The scar will take time to mature. During those first six weeks the scar will pretty much look after itself. By week three you should commence moisturising and massaging this scar with a good moisturiser and rubbing quite vigorously, the aim being to soften the scar and speed up final scar maturation.

The delicate scar tissue is at greater risk of sunburn if exposed to the sun, therefore, you are advised to avoid sun exposure to any scar tissue for the first six weeks of healing, after this if the area is to be exposed to sunlight you should apply sun protection factor 50 sun block to exposed scar tissue.

Though most people experience uneventful post operative recovery, if you develop any of the following you should contact the ward or Mr Armstrong's nursing team:

1. Temperature greater than 38.5°
2. Severe pain not alleviated by simple painkillers
3. Fresh bleeding from the wound, other than a minor ooze