

POST SURGERY CARE INSTRUCTIONS:

Abdominoplasty +/- Liposuction

*These instructions apply to most individuals. We may modify our recommendations to you, depending on your specific needs. Please follow these instructions UNLESS we notify you in writing to do something different. *

LYMPHATIC MASSAGE

For the best results, lymphatic massage is recommended for all liposuction patients. These can be performed with drains in. After liposuction, the lymphatic system becomes overwhelmed resulting in increased swelling and discomfort. Manual lymphatic massage gently "wakes up" the lymph nodes, resulting in decreased swelling and faster healing. **You should start lymphatic massage 2-3 days post-op and schedule a minimum of 6 sessions. You may have 1-2 lymphatic massage sessions per week.** We have handouts for local companies we trust and recommend in your black folder.

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SURGERY

Asymmetry (one side looks different than the other)

- Your belly button and lower abdomen incision WILL appear uneven and puckered. THIS IS NORMAL AND WILL IMPROVE OVER TIME.
- Your body was not perfectly symmetrical before surgery. It is not possible for surgery to make your body symmetrical. One side will be slightly different than the other. THIS IS NORMAL A.
- Significant asymmetry with significantly more pain on the larger side can be a sign of hematoma (bleeding under skin). If you suspect this, please contact our office immediately.

Drainage:

- Expect a lot of bloody drainage for the first 3-5 days from the liposuction incisions.
- It is not possible to keep bandages on these sites dry for long. 4 x 4 gauze dressings should be used to cover these areas.
- Use chux pads or puppy pads to avoid soiling your car, couch and bed.
- You will also notice bloody drainage emanating from around the drain tubes. This is normal and expected. A small piece of gauze and the clear, waterproof (tegaderm) dressings are intended to collect this. Skin Discoloration:
- Bruising is expected in surgically treated areas and typically resolves over 3-4 weeks · Skin may appear very pink in color after surgery. This usually improves over the first few days to weeks. Increasing redness and skin feeling hot to touch around incision are signs of infection. PLEASE NOTIFY US IMMEDIATELY IF YOU EXPERIENCE THIS.
- Skin turning progressively more red or purple above the tummy tuck incision/lower abdomen may be a sign of inadequate blood flow. PLEASE NOTIFY US IMMEDIATELY IF YOU EXPERIENCE THIS.
- If you develop discoloration to extremities, such as fingers or toes, call our office immediately or go to the Emergency Room.

Swelling:

- Swelling is expected and usually worsens over the first 3 days.
- Most of the swelling will resolve over the first 6 weeks and the remainder resolves over 12 months. · You may notice swelling that fluctuates throughout the day in the lower abdomen for at least 6 months. · Swelling of the pubic area (labia or scrotum) is very normal and improves over several weeks, even months. · Swelling makes everything look larger and oddly shaped. It also makes the skin feel hard. · DO NOT USE ICE, COOL PACKS OR HEATING PADS YOUR ABDOMEN. THIS WILL REDUCE BLOOD FLOW AND COULD CAUSE SKIN TO DIE RESULTING IN HEALING PROBLEMS AND PERMANENTLY DISFIGURING SCARRING. Tightness and stiffness in the core and lower back:
- These are normal experiences as the skin, muscles and tissue have been pulled and tightened. · The tightness and pressure from surgery may make it feel more difficult to breathe. This typically resolves over the first 1-2 weeks as the skin

and muscles relax. Severe shortness of breath or difficulty breathing is not normal. You should seek emergency medical attention if this occurs.

- One side may be slightly sorer than the opposite side. This is normal.
- Pain medication and muscle relaxants will help relieve discomfort, but you will not be completely free of discomfort. Severe or worsening pain should be reported to our office immediately.

Tingling, burning or intermittent shooting pain:

- These are normal experiences as the sensory nerves heal.
- Pain medication and muscle relaxants will help you cope with any discomfort.

Hypersensitivity or lack of sensitivity:

- This is normal and will gradually resolve over time.
- It is expected that you will have numbness in your abdomen that may take 1-2 years to maximally improve. • It is expected that you will have numbness in your liposuction treatment areas that may take 6-12 months to maximally improve.

Shiny skin or any itchy feeling:

- Swelling can cause the skin to appear shiny and feel itchy.
- Avoid scratching- this can cause skin breakdown.
- Apply Benadryl cream or gel according to package instructions.
- Oral Benadryl can also help to alleviate severe, constant itchiness. 25 mg every 4-6 hours works for mild to moderate itching. 50 mg can be taken for severe itching, but caution is advised due to sedation.
- Avoid taking Benadryl within 1-2 hours of pain medicine, muscle relaxers and other sedating medications to avoid potentially dangerous over-sedation.

SAFETY / CAREGIVER

After surgery, you will be weak and drowsy. You will need a responsible ADULT caregiver to stay with you 48-72 hours after surgery to monitor your health and support you.

MEDICATION SAFETY

Dr. Camp uses a multimodal pain medication regimen to help keep pain tolerable and our patients comfortable. Stay ahead of the pain for the first 24 hours by following the schedule of medications outlined on your medication chart. After 48 hours, Dr Camp recommends avoiding the use of narcotics like hydrocodone (Norco) and muscle relaxers such as valium. Continue taking Celecoxib (Celebrex) and Gabapentin every 12 hours to maintain comfort. **Constant, severe, worsening pain should be reported to our office immediately.**

It is important to take the medications as prescribed. DO NOT drive while taking narcotics, muscle relaxers or any medication that causes drowsiness. Additionally, DO NOT drink alcohol while still taking any of the prescription medications.

POSITION AND ACTIVITY

BODY POSITION: When resting and sleeping, you will keep a "beach chair" position for 3 weeks to limit tension on the abdominal incision. Elevate your back about 30-45 degrees. Elevate legs with pillows about 6 inches with a slight bend at the knee. Wedge pillows, recliners or adjustable beds are ideal for keeping your body in this position. **STANDING:** Do not stand fully upright for at least 10-14 days to avoid excess tension or incision. It will feel more comfortable to bend at the waist while standing. You will naturally be able to stand up straight gradually 10-14 days after surgery. Do not stretch or force it — this could pull stitches loose. Most tummy tuck patients prefer using a basic walker to get around during the first 2 weeks- it supports your body weight while you keep a bend at the waist. We recommend borrowing one, or they can be purchased on amazon for around \$30.

REST: Rest is important in the early stages of healing. Take care of no one else and let others tend to you.

WALK: It is also important that you are ambulatory, meaning that you are walking under your own strength. During the day, spend 10 minutes every hour engaged in light walking indoors as you recover. Using a walker is recommended! **ACTIVITY:** Do not engage in any stressful activities.

WEEKS 1 - 3

- For the first 3 weeks post-op, walk as much as you would like indoors.
- Avoid raising your heart rate by over 100 or increasing your blood pressure
- No sweating

WEEKS 3 – 6

- You may ease back into light daily activities and hygiene as you normally would. Listen to your body and avoid stretching or motions that cause too much pain. Your normal range of motion will return as you heal. • You may increase activity with faster walking.
- No "exercise" or high impact activity (biking, elliptical, weights or resistance training) • Avoid vigorous household activities like vacuuming, house cleaning, etc.
- Do not lift, push, or pull anything greater than 10lbs.

After 6 WEEKS

- Expect your energy to return to normal 6-8 weeks after surgery.
- Ease back into physical activity, starting very light and increasing frequency and intensity gradually over 3-6 months, depending on your health, physical stamina and pre-operative level of fitness.
- There is no weight limit, per se, but listen to your body. Discomfort is your body telling you to back off. **CORE EXERCISES:** Avoid core targeting exercises like crunches/ sit-ups, high impact/intensity and challenging resistance exercises (keep weight/resistance light) until 12 weeks out from Tummy Tuck. Avoid stretching the core for at least 6 months. Firm core compression is strongly recommended when exercising for 3-6 months post-op. **SUN EXPOSURE:** Avoid sun exposure for 6 weeks. Treated areas are more likely to sunburn for up to 1 year.

DEEP BREATHING

After surgery it may be uncomfortable to take deep breaths. Using your incentive spirometer (blue breathing device) will help strengthen and clear your lungs, lowering the risk of postoperative pneumonia. **Use your incentive spirometer 10 times an hour while awake for 1 week after surgery.**

NUTRITION

Adequate fluid and nutritional intake are CRITICAL for proper healing. You may not feel hungry after surgery. Start with a liquid diet and then progress to a soft foods diet. It is essential that you spread your required fluid and nutritional intake evenly throughout the day. Protein intake is EXTREMELY important for wound healing. We recommend consuming between 60-90g of protein. Protein shakes, smoothies, and soup are great sources of protein and easy to eat after surgery. Limit carbonated beverages and spicy foods that can cause gas and bloating. Avoid salty foods which will increase swelling.

BLOOD CLOT PREVENTION

WALK: It is essential that during the day you get up EVERY HOUR and walk around indoors for 10 minutes while you recover. **SEQUENTIAL COMPRESSION DEVICES (SCDs):** Wear your portable Sequential Compression Devices (SCDs) when you are not actively up and walking for 2 weeks after your surgery. It is especially important to wear them at night, be sure to charge them before bed. **LOVENOX:** You may be prescribed Lovenox injections for up to a week or more. You will be instructed when to start this and where to inject by the recovery room RN upon discharge. You may be told to NOT start the medication if you are noted to bleed easily in surgery. WATCH THIS LINK FOR INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE you give the first shot! Please watch this video so that you know how to use it. <http://www.lovenox.com/>. DO NOT INJECT LOVENOX INTO THE ABDOMEN AFTER A TUMMY TUCK/ ABDOMINOPLASTY OR ABDOMINAL LIPOSUCTION. Do not inject into or near a surgical area or you can cause permanent damage to the surgical site. Always do injections exactly 24 hrs apart

GARMENT

All tummy tuck patients will wear a compression garment until they are at least 6 weeks post-op. Different levels of compression, and garments, are needed at each stage of the healing process. All garments will be provided at your post-op appointments.

Weeks 1 – 2: Light Compression

- You will wake up from surgery wearing the EXACT garment that Dr. Camp wants you to wear until your post-op appointment. Wear your garment 24/7, removing only to shower beginning 48 hours post-op. You may have a binder or girdle with lipo foam.
- Light compression provides support, limits excessive swelling & keeps the skin contours smooth while avoiding damage to tissues.
- Lipo foam (brand name Topifoam) is the white foam that cushions your skin under the abdominal binder/garment and is needed for the first 3 weeks. The foam gets soiled quickly. We recommend purchasing extra lipo foam before surgery to change it as needed.

- Excessively tight garments can cause skin damage or contour irregularities in the early post-op period. Be sure the edges of the compression garment are not rubbing the skin.
- The compression garment may tend to slide up too high or bunch up, forming folds. Please adjust the garment position as needed.

Weeks 2 – 4: Medium compression without foam

- Your garment will begin to feel loose after 2-3 weeks. We will transition you to a new garment without foam at that time to ensure compression.
- While we provide all garments, you may prefer to purchase multiple. We recommend Marena or Faja Tributo. You will need to measure yourself according to their instructions to determine size.
 - Marena offers a lot of options and high-quality garments www.recovery.marena.com.
 - Fajas Tributo offers semi-custom and custom garments <https://fajastributo.com>. Allow enough time for delivery. You will need to check with them to determine delivery timing.

Weeks 4 – 6: High compression

- After 4-6 weeks & when all incisions are well healed, you may increase to high compression. **After week 6**
 - We recommend wearing high level compression 24/7 for 12 weeks to significantly reduce swelling and support healing of the rectus diastasis/muscle repair.
- If there is still significant swelling after 12 weeks, continue compression for another 6 weeks and reassess. · Once swelling seems to have resolved, transition to wearing compression only at night for the next 6 weeks. · Expect swelling in the lower abdomen for up to a year. Some mild swelling/firmness will persist up to a year.

SHOWERING AND HYGIENE

You may shower **48 hours after surgery**. Have someone help you in case you become lightheaded. We recommend taking the prescribed nausea medication 30 minutes before your first shower. This is also a good time to wash your garment if desired, following the instructions on the tag.

- To shower:
 1. Remove garment and any Lipo foam or gauze.
 2. If you have drains, use a lancet or tie a clean shoelace around your neck and attach the bulb drain clips to it. This will keep your drains out of the way while you shower.
 3. Take a warm, not hot shower.
 4. Do not take a bath or swim.
 5. Wash face and hair as you normally would.
 6. **Wash from the neck down using the Hibiclens soap provided for the first week after surgery.** If the Hibiclens irritates your skin, you may switch to Dial soap.
 7. Gently wash over and around the incision sites. Do not avoid incisions—apply Hibiclens with your fingers with gentle circular motion around the areas and rinse.
 8. Gently pat skin and steri-strips dry with a clean towel.
 9. Do NOT apply lotion, powder or creams to your incisions or surgical area unless directed by our office.
 10. Replace dressings with clean gauze or ABD dressings.
 11. Reapply the LipoFoam in the same place it was removed from and put your garment back on. You will need help with this!
 12. Put Garment back on – this may be tricky so have help!
- Change towels/ sheets often for the first few weeks of recovery.
- NO baths, swimming or submerging in pools, hot tubs, oceans, lakes until after 6 weeks and when all incisions completely healed/ no open areas.

CLOTHING

We recommend only loose-fitting clothing for the first 6 weeks post-op. Please refrain from wearing anything that is constricting at the waist- this can cause permanent indentions in your results. PLEASE MAKE SURE ALL OF YOUR PANTS, SHORTS AND UNDERGARMENTS ARE 1-2 SIZES LARGER THAN WHAT YOU WOULD NORMALLY WEAR.

DRAINS

- You may or may not have drains, which typically stay in for 1-3 weeks.

- The purpose of a drain is to get fluid out, so it doesn't accumulate in the body – better out than in! • Upon discharge you will receive instructions on emptying drains and caring for them. **GLOVES MUST BE WORN BY PATIENT AND CARETAKER WHEN EMPTYING DRAINS.**
- Remember to write totals of drainage amounts on your drain log. You will bring the drain logs to your post-op appointment. The amount of drainage determines when the drains come out!

INCISIONS

- Your incisions may seep fluid and some blood for a short time after surgery. You may have gauze pads over your incision when you remove your compression garment. You may need to cover incisions with 4x4 gauze for the first day or two to absorb fluid and keep the skin dry.

Steri-strips

- You will have brown or white surgical tape called "steri-strips" over your incisions. Steri-strips protect the incision and create a thinner scar. They will be removed in office during your 2-week post-op appointment. **DO NOT REMOVE THEM.** If they peel off naturally, that is OK.
- If the steri-strips become loose, **DO NOT** apply tape or attempt to stick them back down. This will trap bacteria around the incision potentially leading to infection and delayed wound healing. If part of the strip is still dry and adherent, you may use clean scissors to trim the non-adherent portion to avoid moisture trapping. **Sutures**
- Sutures will be removed in office in 7-10 days.
- Wash newly healed incisions gently with Hibiclens or dial antibacterial soap in shower after steri strips are removed. Keep your incisions clean and dry. Notify us immediately if you develop any open areas, drainage or redness.

Scar Care

- Once your incisions are healed, our nurse will direct you to start using medical grade scar cream, which will be provided for you.
- Using clean hands, apply the cream over incision scars twice daily.
- Continue scar cream and massage as instructed until you run out.

CONSTIPATION PROTOCOL

You may not have a bowel movement for several days after surgery, this is normal. Constipation can be prevented by staying hydrated, moving, and taking MiraLAX 4x/day in a liquid of your choice. MiraLAX does not cause cramping and is very safe/effective. Diarrhea can be caused by antibiotics taken postoperatively- please notify us if you experience this.

URINATION

We want you to urinate within 4 hours of surgery. Ideally, you should urinate at least twice before you go to bed the evening of surgery. If you are not able to urinate, please notify us ASAP.

NURSE PHONE CALL

Your post-op nurse will call you the day after your surgery. Please answer so we can make sure you are healing normally and answer any questions you may have that are not covered in the post-op instructions. We want to speak to you. We are also happy to speak with your caregiver, but we want to hear your voice and have you answer our post-op questions. Please write down all your questions and save your questions for this call. Our RNs have scheduled time to check on our immediate post-op patients.

QUESTIONS AFTER SURGERY

Steven Camp MD Plastic Surgery

Phone: (817) 228-4315

Text: (817) 646-6991

Office Hours: Monday – Friday, 9 am – 5 pm

For post-op questions, please call or text the office and leave a message for our post-op nurse. Please note there may be delays in getting back to you with non-urgent questions as our RNs are in clinic treating patients during the week. Social media should **NOT** be used to contact us regarding your care. ***Prior to calling, please review your post-op instructions to ensure your question is not already answered.***

EMERGENCIES & AFTER-HOURS

IF YOU GO TO THE HOSPITAL OR URGENT CARE, PLEASE CALL (817) 646-6991 TO LET US KNOW.

NONURGENT: For nonurgent and routine post-op questions after business hours, please TEXT OR CALL THE OFFICE AND LEAVE A VOICEMAIL. We will contact you within 24 hours regarding non-urgent matters. For questions or concerns requiring a more immediate response, call our office to be connected to our after-hours emergency line. **NONURGENT issues include:**

- Medication refill requests
- Routine post-op questions
- Appointment scheduling

URGENT: For urgent, non-life-threatening medical issues or concerns, please CALL OUR OFFICE IMMEDIATELY to be connected to our after-hours emergency line. The after-hours emergency line rings directly to Dr. Steven Camp and Sara Camp AG-ACNP, APRN, MSN. If they do not answer, please leave a detailed voice message. They are most likely on another call and will contact you immediately.

URGENT issues include:

- Surgical drain issues
- Fever of 101 or greater
- Allergic reaction to medications
- Increasing swelling or redness around the incision.
- Drainage from incision that is yellow or green.
- Drainage from incision that has a foul odor.
- Severe pain that is not relieved by medications.
- Severe nausea or vomiting that is not relieved by medications.

EMERGENCY: If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, CALL 9-11 OR GO TO THE NEAREST EMERGENCY ROOM IMMEDIATELY. While we cannot provide immediate assistance, we ask that you update us once you are safe. **EMERGENT issues include:**

- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chest pain
- Loss of consciousness
- Calf pain or tenderness, lower leg/calf swelling, one leg more swollen than the other
- Uncontrolled bleeding

COMMON QUESTIONS

Jewelry/Piercings: If you have piercings, you can have non-metal spacers placed before you arrive at the surgery center, as long as the piercing area is a NON-SURGICAL area. Otherwise, not even a spacer is allowed. Please don't call us and ask about this as there are no exceptions. It's for your protection and keeps the tools used in surgery from burning your skin!

Menstrual Cycle: What if I'm on my period the day of surgery? This will NOT hinder you from having surgery. Please wear a pad (not a tampon) to surgery. You will be provided with pads and disposable underwear at the surgery center.

Exercise: See 'Activity Section' for details. Doing so early can mess up your results and prolong healing.

SEX: Refrain from sex for at least 4-6 weeks after surgery. Resume with caution and avoid pressure or rubbing on surgical sites.

Swimming/Baths: AVOID for at least 6 weeks after surgery. All your incisions must be COMPLETELY healed and closed before you do this. Otherwise, you could get a bad infection! This includes lakes, oceans, hot tub, pool, and bath water.

Scar Treatments: A few weeks after your procedure and when incisions completely closed, our nurse will direct you to start using Silicone Scar Strips or silicone scar gel- apply with clean hands. Scar Away is a good over the counter brand. You can get these products at CVS, Walgreens, Wal-Mart, or on Amazon. You may start applying scar strips for 12 hrs. on, then 12 hrs. off every day. Scar gel may be applied every 12 hours. Continue using for several months after surgery.

Post-Operative Travel: Typically, we recommend not traveling for at least 6 weeks for vacations! Necessary travel before this time should be done cautiously, taking care to adhere to lifting and activity restrictions to avoid complications. This is the timeframe in which you have the highest risk of getting an infection or an incision opening up.

Alcohol: Avoid for 2 weeks before surgery and at least 2 weeks after surgery. You must be off all of your medications for at least ONE

full week before you drink alcohol. Alcohol is NOT good for healing!

Smoking: No smoking or second-hand exposure to smoke for AT LEAST 6 weeks after surgery.

Tanning: Avoid excessive sun exposure 10 days prior to surgery. If you have a sunburn, surgery may have to be delayed. Avoid direct sun exposure of surgical site skin for at least 6 weeks after surgery. Sunblock with UVA/ UVB protection SPF 35 or greater is recommended to protect skin with any sun exposure. Note: bathing suits and thin clothing offer minimal sun protection. You should always apply sunblock under such garments.

Spray Tan: Avoid for 2 weeks prior to surgery and for 6 weeks after surgery.

Tattoos: Avoid for 6 weeks before surgery and 3 months after surgery to decrease the risk of infection.

Pets: No pets sleeping in your bed for 6 weeks. Do not walk large dogs with a leash for 6 weeks after surgery.

Nails: Do not replace dip, gel, or acrylic nails until cleared by your nurse

Should I search online or ask my friends if I have any questions about my procedure or recovery? You know the answer to this one! Google "experts," reading social media "expert groups" or asking your friend that had plastic surgery causes a lot of problems and unnecessary anxiety. Please call us if you have any questions or concerns. Dr. Camp is a board-certified plastic surgeon with nearly 10 years in private practice. It is dangerous to attempt to diagnose yourself or depend on the advice of bloggers, social media sites or friends and family. We are here to help, ask us anything!