

POSTOPERATIVE CARE-OUTPATIENT SURGERY

BODY LIFT

- **Your first 24 hours**

Someone should stay overnight with you.

- **Position**

Since the Circumferential Body Lipectomy involves tightening of the abdominal muscles coupled with removal of excess skin of the abdomen, hips, and buttocks and back, you will experience some difficulty sitting for a week or two or even longer. The tightness will gradually disappear as you heal and progressively use your body muscles for the activities of daily living. Please make no special attempts to stretch or bend down during the first 2-3 weeks of healing. You must change your position and walk around the house every 1-2 hours to reduce the danger of blood clots.

- **Dressings**

An abdominal binder will be placed around your abdomen and hips after surgery to provide some gentle pressure, to give you stability, and to reduce swelling. The compression garment or binder is required to be worn continuously for 6 weeks following surgery (except when laundering, bathing, etc.) unless otherwise instructed by the physician. If it feels too tight or causes pain, take it off and call us at 859-254-5665. Some patients choose to wear the garment for another several months after surgery. Let your own comfort and the amount of swelling you experience guide you. We want you as comfortable as possible without swelling.

- **Sutures**

There will be sutures around the belly button and these will be removed 7-10 days after surgery.

- **Drains**

The physician will place 2-4 drains into the surgical area at the time of surgery. The drains evacuate the fluid that accumulates after surgery and enables you to heal faster. When the drains are first put in place, the bulbs at the end of the tubes will be compressed to create gentle suction. As the fluid collects in the bulb, it will expand. **Drain Care:** Secure the bulbs of the drains to your clothing or the abdominal binder with a safety pin. Whenever the bulbs fill or expand 50% or more, empty the bulbs by opening the plugs at the top and pouring out the contents. Do not attempt to remove the bulbs from the tubing. Squeeze the bulbs to recompress them, and put the plugs back into the hole at the top in order to maintain the vacuum. If the bulbs fill rapidly after emptying them, or you need to empty them more than three times a day, please call us at 859-254-5665. The physician or a nurse will remove the drains 1-2 weeks after surgery, when the fluid begins to turn a clear straw color and/or the amount of draining diminishes. You may shower the day after your drains are removed.

- **Tightness**

Your abdomen, hips, buttocks and back will feel tight for about a month or longer.

- **Healing and Sensory Nerves**

Usually, the skin around the incisions remains partially or completely numb for several months or longer. Tingling, burning, or shooting pains indicate regeneration of the small sensory nerves. This feeling will disappear with time and is not cause for alarm. It may take as long as 2 years for sensation in your abdomen to be restored completely.

- **Swelling**

Normal postoperative swelling always occurs and will take several months to disappear completely.

- **Showering and Bathing**

You may take a “sponge bath” until directed differently by the physician. In most cases, you may begin showering and bathing after your drains are removed.

- **Activities**

Body lifts are probably the most uncomfortable operation we do. You will experience some pain for 10-20 days and will not feel like resuming sports or heavy exercise for at least 6 weeks. After the first 2 weeks, you may resume moderate walks for as long as it is tolerable. Too much initial activity can prolong swelling. Do not plan of resuming aerobic or strenuous exercise for about 5-6 weeks after surgery.

- **Driving**

You may resume driving within two weeks.

- **Diet**

If you have any postoperative nausea, carbonated sodas and dry crackers may settle the stomach. If nausea is severe, let us know as soon as possible. If you feel normal, start with liquids and bland foods, and if those are well tolerated, progress to a regular diet.

- **Smoking**

Smoking reduces capillary flow in your skin. We advise you not to smoke at all 2 weeks prior to surgery and 2 weeks after surgery.

- **Alcohol**

Alcohol dilates the blood vessels and could increase postoperative bleeding. Please do not drink until you have stopped taking the prescription pain pills, as the combination of pain pills and alcohol can be dangerous.

- **Exercise**

You may take gentle walks within a few days. Do not return to aerobic exercise, strenuous exercises for six weeks. Dr. Schantz will give you clearance to increase your activities according to the progress of your recovery.

- **Sexual Activity**

You may enjoy sexual activity as your body allows with certain restrictions. (Refer to back to activity)

- **Scars**

Initially, the scars will appear red or dark pink, and they will slowly fade over a period of months to a year or more.

- **Exposure to Sunlight**

We recommend that you protect your scars from the sun for a year after surgery. Even through a bathing suit, a good deal of sunlight can reach the skin and cause damage. Wear a sunscreen with a skin-protection factor (SPF) of a least 15 when out in the sun.

- **Returning To Work**

The average person usually returns to work or to a social schedule in 2-3 weeks. However, there is considerable variation in healing and occasionally a full month is required.

- **Post Operative Appointments**

It is very important that you follow the schedule of appointments we establish after surgery.

- **Finally**

If you have excessive bleeding or pain, call the office at 859-254-5665, day or night.