

After your Tummy Tuck

Instructions and Information from Dr. Dauwe

You will be drowsy following surgery- we have given you medications to help make you more comfortable. Expect to wake and doze on and off during the evening. Your overnight nurse will make you comfortable, provide you with medication as necessary and give you liquids until you feel hungry and want more solid food. Our nurse will also be helping get you in and out of bed as well as some walking.

Your abdomen will feel tight, and you will be wearing an elastic support garment to hold the tissues flat against your abdomen to prevent fluid accumulation and provide support for your comfort.

The morning following surgery, it is extremely important to begin moving about, even though your abdomen will feel stiff. Each time you move about, the discomfort decreases. Not moving not only causes stiffness and increases discomfort, but increases the risk of medical complications such as blood clots. *Do Not Worry- you will not damage anything by moving around. All of your surgical areas have been reinforced to encourage early movement.*

During your stay in the surgical facility, you can receive medication for the pain either by injection or by mouth. After leaving our facility, pain medication by mouth is adequate.

After surgery you will have a small amount of gauze and tape over your incision. Leave this in place until returning home. You may remove the gauze, but leave the tape directly over your incision in place. This is to be left on for two weeks.

For the first 2-3 days following surgery, there may be a slight amount of drainage from your incision lines onto your dressing. If any drainage continues after your dressing is removed, simply place a small folded gauze pad with a small amount of paper tape over the area to avoid any drainage staining your clothing.

All of your "stitches" have been placed beneath the skin to avoid any marks on the skin. All will dissolve over a period of time. None of these need to be removed in the office.

The first day or two following surgery, try to get up and move about for short periods of time, several times a day. This will decrease your stiffness and discomfort much more rapidly, and speed your recovery. Don't try to perform any heavy exercise, heavy lifting, or other strenuous activity. It is normal to feel a bit tired following surgery- you will regain your strength over the next three to four days if you will increase your activity gradually.

It's not unusual to have some nausea following surgery, particularly if you begin to get up and move about too quickly. If this occurs, simply relax, and don't try to eat any heavy foods- just try clear liquids and work your way up to solids foods.

You have been given a prescription for pain medication. Please take a pill before bed the evening of surgery (preferably after you have kept something in your stomach to avoid stomach irritation). It's a good idea to take another pill the morning following surgery, since you may feel a bit stiff and uncomfortable when you begin to move about. If the pills disagree with you in any way, simply try Extra-Strength Tylenol. Discomfort following surgery is generally mild to moderate. This can last several days to 2 weeks following surgery. If you start to experience significant pain, please notify the office immediately.

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You may shower as normal immediately following surgery. A small amount of water on the incision causes no harm. Do not soak the incisions in water or apply any other material to them.

You received antibiotics in your IV prior to surgery and a prescription for after surgery. Infection following any type of plastic surgery is extremely rare. Infection is usually not apparent for several days following surgery. If you notice significantly increased redness or swelling accompanied by tenderness or fever at any time, call so that we may examine you. It's normal to experience temperature elevations to 101° F following surgery for many patients. If your temperature elevates about 102° F please notify our office immediately.

Avoid any type of exercise, which elevates your pulse rate over 100 for at least 3 weeks following surgery. Aerobic exercise elevates your blood pressure and can cause bleeding. Avoid straining or heavy lifting type activity for 4-6 weeks following surgery. Many patients find that the compression garment makes you more comfortable for the first few weeks following surgery. It is absolutely essential for the first 2 weeks following surgery that the garment be worn as close to 24 hours a day to prevent fluid accumulation. After that, you may wear or not wear it as you choose.

As we discussed prior to surgery, you will certainly have areas of your abdomen, which will have decreased sensation. This is normal, and as the swelling subsides and the skin nerves regrow, your sensation will return.

Your incision line will feel firm for several weeks following surgery; this is part of the normal healing process. The scar will soften over a period of months following surgery. Please do not apply any scar management creams until after it has been discussed with us.

Since the lower part of your abdomen has been tightened significantly more than any other area, it is common to notice a small amount of bulging in the upper abdomen. As your tissues in your lower abdomen adjust to surgery, any slight bulging in the upper abdomen will disappear.

Be patient with your tissues- they take time to recover after your surgery. You will notice areas of firmness, numbness and possible bulge spots for a few weeks after surgery. Don't worry- this is normal and will resolve as your tissues recover.

After your tape has been removed from your incision, you'll note that there will be small ridges along the incision lines. These ridges are normal and necessary to achieve the best long-term scar results. They will flatten and soften over a period of weeks. The incision lines will become red for some weeks, and then the redness will subside over the first few months.

Remember that the degree of swelling will be different on the two sides- even if we have performed the exactly the same procedure. Don't worry about any differences between the sides for the first six weeks following surgery.

Please contact the office within 24 hours of returning home to update us of your process and set up your first follow up appointment.

If you have additional questions or should any problems arise, please contact the office immediately by phone at 214-821-6580