

Post-Operative Instructions

Tummy Tuck (Abdominoplasty)

Following your surgery, it is important that you follow Dr. Shaddix's post-operative instructions. If you have any questions regarding these instructions or any other aspect of your care, please call our office at (850) 476-7100.

General

- You will need to arrange for someone to drive you home after surgery and to help you care for yourself for the first 24-48 hours after your procedure.
- It is important to relax after surgery. You will have less energy than usual for the first few days and should not try to go back to your normal activities right away. Your body needs rest to heal.
- Depending on your job, you should be able to return to work after about 2 weeks with duty restrictions.
- If you take regular medications, ask Dr. Shaddix when it is safe to resume taking them.
- If drains are placed, you will be given separate instructions on how to empty them and record their output.

Medications

- For the first ten days after surgery, do not take aspirin or other NSAIDs (Bufferin, Anacin, Excedrin, Aleve, Ibuprofen, Motrin, etc.).
- Please remember that the pain medication prescribed by Dr. Shaddix contains Tylenol. It is NOT safe to take regular Tylenol at the same time you are taking the pain medication.
- When taking the prescription pain medication, you should not drink alcohol or drive a car.
- The pain medication may make you drowsy or give you an upset stomach. If this is the case, ask Dr. Shaddix about alternative medications.
- Take your antibiotics until they are all gone.
- After surgery, especially while taking pain medications, you may become constipated. It is a good idea to have an over-the-counter stool softener on hand in case this becomes an issue.

Activity

- You should be walking around on the evening of surgery and frequently thereafter to help prevent a blood clot from forming in your legs. However, you should not be doing much more than walking and climbing stairs. No heavy lifting (anything greater than 20 pounds) or strenuous activities such as sports are allowed until 4 weeks after surgery.
- Move and pump your legs and feet frequently when sitting and lying down.
- You will initially need to walk slightly bent at the waist. You will gradually be able to return to normal posture over the first 1-2 weeks.
- During the first 1-2 weeks, you will need to sleep in a recliner or on pillows so that you can maintain a slight bend at the waist to avoid tension on the incision.



- Wait about 2 weeks after surgery before having sex or doing anything to raise your blood pressure substantially.
- Take deep breaths and cough every hour to clear your lungs and prevent pneumonia.

Diet

- The anesthesia you are given may make you nauseated during the first day after surgery. Therefore, it is wise to drink liquids and eat only mild foods during this time (jello, mashed potatoes, soups). When you feel like it, you may resume your regular diet.
- Increase your fluid intake in the first couple weeks after surgery. Water and sports drinks with electrolytes are good. During the first couple of weeks of your recovery, avoid excess alcohol consumption as this can make you dehydrated.

Incision Care

- You will have an abdominal binder or other compression garment to wear after surgery. You should wear this around the clock for the first 3 weeks after surgery. It should only be removed for showering.
- Dr. Shaddix typically places steri-strips over your incision. These are tightly adherent to your skin. These serve to protect the incision as it is healing. If these begin to peel off, you may gently clip any peeled up edges with a small pair of scissors. Dr. Shaddix will remove any remaining strips for you at your 3-week postop visit.
- It is safe to shower or sponge-bathe on the second day following surgery. Allow the steri-strips to get wet. Afterwards, pat the steri-strips dry. Do not take a regular bath or soak your incisions.
- There may be some clear or pink drainage from the incision over the first couple of days. If so, you can place gauze or a maxi-pad over the steri-strips and under the compression garment.
- Occasionally, some absorbable sutures might poke through the skin. This is not a cause for alarm. If this happens, please call our office so we can trim them.

Things to Avoid

- Do not smoke or allow yourself to be exposed to second-hand smoke.
- Do not stay in bed all day. Walk frequently.
- Do not swim in a pool/lake/river/ocean for 4 weeks following surgery.
- Sauna and steam baths should be avoided for 6 weeks following surgery.
- Do not tan your scars for the first year following surgery because they may tan darker than the surrounding skin. This darkness, if allowed to occur, may be permanent. In general, it is safe to begin using sunscreen on your incisions 3 weeks after surgery. You should cover your incisions with sunscreen during the first year after surgery. Tanning beds should be avoided.

Things to Look For

- If you develop a fever of 101°F or greater, increasing pain, redness around the incisions, or concerning drainage from the incisions, call Dr. Shaddix immediately on his cell phone number that will be provided to you on the day of surgery.



Things to Expect

- Scars may become reddened before they fade. This is normal.
- Your pain will be at its peak on postoperative days 2 and 3. It should improve after that.
- If your procedure involved liposuction, the treated areas will have quite a bit of discoloration and bruising. This is normal and will usually resolve within 3 weeks. Swelling may increase during week 2 after liposuction but will then subside. Areas of firmness are a normal part of the healing process after liposuction. These may take months to resolve. Massage and your compression garment will help these areas resolve more rapidly. There will certainly be substantial drainage from the small liposuction incisions for a couple of days. This will stop on its own very soon.
- Expect some discoloration and bruising of the abdomen as well. This is normal and will usually resolve within 2 weeks.
- Expect some numbness of the abdominal skin that will subside over the first couple of months. Avoid use of ice or heat since you will not have normal sensation right away. Normal sensation generally returns within a few weeks.

Follow-up

- Dr. Shaddix would like to see you in clinic 1 week after surgery. This appointment is typically prescheduled, please reach out to our office if you are unsure about the date and time.
- Dr. Shaddix would like to see you again 3 weeks after surgery and then again at 3 months.
- Please remember that we are here for you to answer any and all questions, no matter how small! If you have a question, it is likely that we have the answer.

