

## **AFTER LIPOSUCTION INSTRUCTIONS**

- **Going Home:** You must have someone drive you home after your surgery. It is strongly recommended that you have someone spend the first 24 hours with you. Resume your usual diet and drink plenty of water and juices.
- **Pain:** You may experience some soreness after your procedure but should not have any significant pain. You can take extra strength Tylenol, 2 every 4-6 hours as needed. For a more restful sleep, you can take Benadryl 50mg.
- **Activities:** Quiet rest is recommended immediately after surgery. After surgery, do not drive or operate hazardous machinery the rest of the day. Do not make any important personal decisions for 24 hours after surgery. Later in the day or evening you are welcome to take a short walk if desired. The day after liposuction you should feel well enough to drive your car and engage in light to moderate physical activities. You may carefully resume exercise and vigorous physical activity 2 to 4 days after surgery. It is suggested that you begin with 25% of your normal workout and then increase your activity daily as tolerated. Most people can return to a desk job within one to two days after surgery, although one must expect to be sore and easily fatigued for several days.
- **Garment:** After liposuction, a garment is worn to hold the absorbent pads in place and to provide mild compression that encourages the drainage of the blood-tinged anesthetic solution. Do not remove the garment until the morning after surgery to take a shower. When the garment is first removed, you may experience a brief sensation of dizziness. Feeling lightheaded is similar to what you might experience when standing up too quickly. Should dizziness occur, simply sit or lie down until it passes. Dizziness may be prevented by removing the garment slowly.
- **Beginning the day after surgery,** the garment should be removed daily to permit you to shower and to wash the garment. The garment and binders should be worn day and night plus an additional 2 to 3 weeks after the drainage has stopped. This is usually about three days. Discontinuing the use of the garment and binders early may result in more prolonged drainage. Because of the comfort it provides, many patients will wear their elastic garment longer than 2-3 weeks. Wearing the post-op garment for more than the minimal number of days is of no significant advantage in terms of the ultimate cosmetic results, however, some patients wear the garment for additional days or weeks because of the comfort the support provides.
- **You should expect a large volume of blood-tinged anesthetic solution to drain from the small incisions during the first 24 to 48 hours.** In general, the more drainage there is, the less bruising and swelling there will be. For the first 24 to 36 hours, bulky absorbent dressings are worn under the garment. After most of the drainage has stopped, you need only place thin absorbent gauze dressings over the incision sites that continue to drain.

- **Wound Care and Bathing:** Keep your dressings and incisions clean. You may remove the dressings 24 hours after surgery to shower unless you have been instructed not to do so. Shower once or twice daily. First wash your hands, then wash incisions gently with soap and water. Afterwards, gently pat incisions dry with a clean towel and apply a dollop of vaseline to each incision. Apply new absorbent dressings until incisions have stopped draining.

**DO NOT apply ice-packs or a heating pad to skin over the treated areas.**

**DO NOT apply hydrogen peroxide or plastic Band-Aids to incision sites.**

**DO NOT soak in a bath tub or take a sit down bath for 10 days.**

**DO NOT get in a Jacuzzi, swimming pool, lake or ocean for 10 days.**

- Do not expose the skin incisions to sun or tanning beds for 1 month. Wear a SPF 30 on the incision sites after they have healed.
- **Bruising:** Bruising is minimal with the tumescent technique but some is to be expected. It will resolve with time. More serious bleeding may result in hematoma formation that will cause pain greater than usual. Small hematomas will be absorbed. Large ones may have to be aspirated or drained.
- **Swelling and lumpiness:** Swelling due to the inflammatory reaction that occurs with all types of surgery will most likely occur and will take several weeks to fully resolve. Small lumps and bulges will improve with time and massaging these areas will help.
- **Numbness and itching:** You will likely experience sensations of pin pricking, crawling, itching and numbness that usually disappears after a few weeks. Itching of the treated areas for several days after surgery is common. To help relieve this, you may try taking Benadryl.
- Slight temperature elevation during the first 48 hours after surgery is a natural consequence of the body's reaction to surgery.
- **Scars:** Incisions will be red, pink, or reddish purple for 3 to 12 months but will generally fade out. Some people, for genetic or inherited reasons, may develop thick, wide, depressed or elevated scars. Your previous experience with scars should be an indication of how you will heal.
- **Post-operative asymmetry:** Some asymmetry and small bulges may occur from edema or swelling. It usually improves after 3 months. If it doesn't, small areas may be treated under local anesthesia in the office.
- **Washed-out feeling or fatigue:** This can occur from loss or shift of large quantities of body fluid containing salt and other electrolytes that is the result of fat removal, surgical stress, and anesthesia. Drinking a large quantity of fluids before and after your surgery will help avoid this.
- **Pigmentation:** The skin may appear darkened from blood pigmentation. It will usually lighten in six months to one year. Avoid sun exposure without sun block.

- **Skin Changes:** With improved techniques and instruments, sagging, wrinkles, waviness, and dimpling of the skin have become much less common. Skin that is tight and firm before surgery, will probably remain about the same. Loose, sagging skin before surgery may tighten up a bit, but often remains loose. Indentation due to excess fat removal is a possibility, but extreme care is taken to try and avoid removing too much fat. If this occurs, it may require fat transfer.
- Be careful to not wear really tight clothing or belts around the waist if this area was liposuctioned until most of the swelling has resolved and the area is near healed.
- **Psychological response:** You may experience some post-operative depression or “let down” which can occur after many types of operations and this is a natural phase for some people. Remember the healing phase may take several months. Feel free to discuss your surgery openly with your family and friends, who often don’t understand the benefits of liposuction and the necessary healing time. They may make uninformed comments, which can create emotional conflicts and put doubts in your mind about the surgery. Reassure them that you alone elected to have the surgery to improve your self-image and well being. Rely on Dr. Bigelow and her staff to tell you how you are progressing.
- It is important to keep all of your planned post-operative office appointments. Your first post-operative visit will be in 10 days. You will then have appointments at 6 weeks, 3 months and 6 months unless you have a need to be seen at some other time.

**Please keep these instructions on hand for reference until you are completely healed from your procedure.**