



PROFESSOREN MÜHLBAUER . Effnerstrasse 38 . D-81925 München

Postoperative instructions: Abdominoplasty (Tummy tuck surgery):

TYPICAL POST-OPERATIVE SYMPTOMS

Once your surgery is completed, please follow these instructions in order to heal properly and have a pleasant recovery.

Normal symptoms of abdominoplasty and signs to watch for following tummy tuck surgery include the following:

Tightness and stiffness of the abdomen: Bruising, swelling and redness: Tingling, burning or intermittent shooting pain: These are normal experiences as the skin, tissues, and sensory nerves heal. Pain medication and muscle relaxants will help you cope with any discomfort. If you have drains, you may experience additional localized discomfort at the drain sites.

Skin firmness, hypersensitivity or lack of sensitivity: This is normal and will gradually resolve over time.

Shiny skin or any itchy feeling: Swelling can cause the skin in treated areas to appear shiny. As the healing process advances, you may also have mild to severe itching. An antihistamine might help to alleviate severe, constant itchiness.

Asymmetry: both sides of your body heal differently: One side of your body may look or feel quite different from the other in the days following surgery. This is normal.

CALL THE CLINIC IMMEDIATELY IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING (089 20 4000 145)

A high **fever**, severe **nausea** and **vomiting**, continued **dizziness** or **incoherent behavior**.

Any **pain** that **cannot be controlled by your pain medication**.

Bright red skin that is hot to the touch.

Excessive bleeding or fluid seeping through the incisions.

A severely **misshapen region** anywhere on your abdomen or bruising that is localized to one specific point of the abdomen.

Severe lower extremity swelling and pain.

Chest pain and/or shortness of breath



POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS (FIRST WEEK):

Rest, but not bed rest. While rest is important in the early stages of healing, equally important is that you are ambulatory, meaning that you are walking under your own strength. Spend 5 minutes every 2 hours engaged in light walking indoors as you recover.

Recline, do not lie down. This will be more comfortable for you, and can reduce swelling. Always keep your head elevated.

Do not smoke. Smoking can greatly impair your safety prior to surgery and your ability to heal following surgery. You must not smoke throughout your entire healing process.

Good nutrition. Fluids are critical following surgery. Stick to non-carbonated, non-alcoholic, caffeine-free and green tea-free beverages including fruit juices and water, milk and yogurt drinks.

Incision dressings. Your incisions will be covered with tapes. We will remove your dressings. Your incisions may seep fluid and some blood for 1-3 days after surgery. Do not remove any steri-strips over your stitches.

Drains. You will typically have two-three drains placed at the time of surgery to help remove fluid that collects under the skin. Typically the drains will stay in for several days. The drains will come out when the output is less than 30cc for a 24hr period.

Bath: Do not take a bath or soak in a hot tub or spa until the wound have healed completely. We will instruct you when and how to take a shower.

Take pain medication as prescribed

Relax. Do not engage in any stressful activities. Do not lift, push or pull anything. Take care of no one, and let others tend to you.

Ease into an upright position. You may slowly begin to stand taller each day as the tummy region continues to heal. Relax, but be patient, you will not be able to stand fully erect for 1-2 weeks after surgery

Do not resume any exercise other than regular walking for the first 6 weeks after surgery. Walking is essential every day to prevent the formation of blood clots. Continue to pamper yourself.

Do not smoke. Do not consume alcohol.

Constipation. Due to the narcotic pain medication, the gastrointestinal tract will slow after surgery and constipation can occur. The sooner narcotics are stopped, the less of a problem this may become. Also, the prescribed stool softener is helpful to limit this problem. After a few days, it is appropriate to use over-the-counter laxatives in either liquid, tablet or suppository form. Laxoberal tablets or suppositories are appropriate treatments and can be bought in the pharmacy without prescription.

Expect weight gain. You will temporarily gain weight after surgery. This is caused by water retention, which is a normal hormonal response to the stress of surgery. We advise you not to weigh yourself for at least 2-3 weeks after surgery.

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS (FOLLOWING WEEKS):

Compression garment: You should wear a compression garment ("Bauchbinde"/"Miederhose") 24 hours a day for at least 6 weeks after surgery.



Healing. Everyone has the capacity to heal. However, this capacity depends on a number of factors such as your genetic background, your overall state of health and your lifestyle (exercise, diet, smoking, drinking, etc.). We can facilitate, but not accelerate the healing process. Please take an active role in your recovery, but, at the same time, understand the importance of following our instructions

Practice good sun protection. Do not expose your scars to direct sunlight. If you are outdoors, apply at least an SPF 30 to the abdomen at least 30 minutes prior to sun exposure and protective clothing. The skin of your abdomen is highly susceptible to sunburn or the formation of irregular, darkened pigmentation.

Depression. Your body (including your brain) is exposed to great amounts of physiological and mental stress after surgery. This is caused by a number of factors. Your hormone and steroid levels are elevated and you are taking medications (especially the narcotic and muscle relaxants) that directly affect your physiology and psychology. Your sleep cycle is probably disrupted, so you are likely sleep deprived. All of these factors, combined with the emotions and expectations you have invested in your surgery, can lead to a brief “let down” or “depression” after abdominoplasty surgery. Some patients may subconsciously have expected to feel or look better “instantly”, even though they rationally understood this would not be the case. Patients commonly question their decision to have cosmetic surgery during the first few weeks. As healing occurs, and as your physiology, stress level and sleep return to normal, these thoughts usually disappear. If you feel mildly depressed, understanding that this is a natural phase of the healing process may help you cope. If this happens to you, we want you to discuss it with us, especially if your depression is severe.

Patience: Please understand that it takes a minimum of 6-8 weeks to see the results of surgery coming into final form and, in many cases, your final results will not be fully realized for six months up to one year after surgery. It simply takes time for the swelling to resolve, your tissues to soften, and for scars to begin fading. This means that time is your ally and that swelling and scars will likely improve with time. Understanding this now will help temper your expectations, hone your patience and make for a more pleasurable recovery.

Swelling. The tissues, especially of the lower abdomen, flanks, and pubic area are very swollen after surgery. It may take up to six months after surgery for this “fullness” to resolve.

Usual pain. The nerves around your abdomen may be irritated for up to a year after surgery. Don't be surprised if you experience occasional shooting pain, tingling or “electricity” in that area. This typically resolves as the inflammation decreases and the nerves fully heal. Persistent or severe pain should be reported to us. A permanent loss of skin sensitivity may be present below the umbilicus.

A one-year post surgery follow-up is recommended. However, you may call our office at any time with your concerns or for needed follow-up.