

**Dana M. Coberly, M.D.**  
**ABDOMINOPLASTY (TUMMY TUCK)**  
*After Care Instructions*

- It is important to get out of bed early and often after your surgery (with assistance) to prevent postoperative problems. Take deep breaths or use the plastic incentive spirometer often provided for you at the hospital.
- You may choose to have an epidural placed to make your first night after surgery more comfortable. It will be removed the next morning.
- It is important to walk bent over at the hips for 5-7 days after surgery to reduce tension on the suture lines. Sleep with your hips in a flexed position and your head elevated on 2 pillows. Following these instructions will help with the quality of your scar.
- If you have discomfort/anxiety, take the medication prescribed every 4-6 hours. It is best to take the medication with crackers, jello, etc. Do not take the pain medication if you do not have pain. Do not drink alcohol while taking the pain and/or anxiety medication.
- A light diet is best for the day of surgery. Begin by taking liquids slowly and progress to soups and jello. You can start with a soft regular diet the next day. Stay on a bland diet for 2-3 days to reduce gas. Avoid carbonated drinks.
- Keep your drainage bulbs collapsed and record time and amounts of drainage over a 24-hour period. Each patient heals differently, and Dr. Coberly will make the final decisions regarding drain removal. Drains are typically removed 5-14 days after surgery.
- Wear a binder continuously for 14 days. You may remove it to shower daily starting 48 hours after surgery. After 2 weeks, the binder may be worn during the day only.
- Pat steri-strips dry after showering. They will be removed 2-3 weeks after surgery.
- You can expect swelling of the surgery site. If the swelling on one side is definitely more pronounced on one side than the other side, or if you are having pain which is NOT relieved by the pain medication, call Dr. Coberly at 813-259-1550.
- Excessive and strenuous activities should be avoided for 3 weeks. Keep your heart rate below 100 beats per minute during that time and do not lift more than 10 lbs. (approximately the weight of a gallon of milk).
- You may resume sexual activity in 4 weeks. Stress on the abdominal muscles may stretch/break the stitches if you exercise more than just walking before 4 weeks.
- It is good to walk for 15-20 minutes 2-3 times a day.
- You may begin swimming 4 weeks after surgery.
- Please do not drive for 7-10 days and do not drive while taking narcotic pain medication. Do not take aspirin or products containing aspirin for 3 weeks after surgery.
- Moderate swelling of the abdomen is to be expected. You may find that your clothes do not fit as easily as before. Be patient. The swelling will gradually subside and you will be back to normal in 3-6 months.
- Your abdomen will feel tight and you will feel full more quickly after eating. This will subside slowly over the next 6 months.
- If you notice some vaginal burning and itching (vaginitis) as a result of the antibiotic given after surgery, Dr. Coberly or your family physician can prescribe *Diflucan*, or yeast medications can be purchased over the counter. Ask your pharmacist for assistance.

- Infrequently after the drains have been removed, additional fluid will build up in the abdomen. If this happens, please contact Dr. Coberly, as the fluid may need to be removed. All incisions will be extremely sensitive during the healing phase. Direct sun is to be avoided. When going out, even on cloudy days, use a sunscreen with SPF 15 or greater for at least 1 year that has both UVA and UVB protection.
- If you have nausea, vomiting, rash, shortness of breath, or diarrhea after taking your medications, please contact your doctor.
- If you develop a fever (oral temperature greater than 101 degrees), redness, or increased pain or swelling at the surgical incisions, please call your doctor.
- Suggestions to relieve abdominal discomfort or indigestion after surgery:
  - Drink plenty of water – 8 glasses a day!
  - Drink warm liquids (tea or coffee).
  - Prune juice mixed with 7-up (half and half) for constipation.
  - If severely constipated, use *Milk of Magnesia*, white *Karo* syrup (2 tablespoons twice a day taken with one glass of warm water), stool softeners (*Colace*), and *Fleet* enemas (regular or oil retention) as a last resort.
  - Walking helps the circulation in the whole body.