

## University of Virginia Plastic Surgery

### Post-Operative Instructions For Abdominoplasty/Panniculectomy

The following instructions are general guidelines to promote a safe and uneventful recovery from your surgery.

#### Activities:

- You should walk around your home or hotel the night of the procedure the days immediately following. **DO NOT STAY IN YOUR BED.**
- You may need to bend forward slightly while walking the first week after your procedure.
- Avoid twisting of the torso. Instead turn using your whole body.
- Avoid aerobic exercise, vigorous activity, weight lifting and contact sports for 4 to 6 weeks after your procedure.
- Most patients return to work in 2-3 weeks depending on how physically demanding your job is.

#### Bathing and Incision Care:

- Most patient shower after being seen by University of Virginia Plastic Surgery for their first postoperative appointment.
- Do not bathe in a tub until after your drain sites are healed.
- Your sutures may dissolve or may need to be removed depending on the technique used.
- Wear abdominal support garment for 2-6 weeks day and night after your procedure.
- After one month you may begin using Vitamin E or University of Virginia Plastic Surgery may prescribe Silagen with SPF
- Avoid sun exposure to your scars for at least six months.
- Sunlight can permanently affect the skin's pigmentation, causing the scar to turn dark.
- Wear sunblock with SPF 30 or higher if you know you will be unable to avoid the sun.

#### Pain/ Medications:

- You will feel discomfort and pain for several days following your surgery.
- This can be controlled with pain medication prescribed by University of Virginia Plastic Surgery. Most patient takes narcotics for a few days to a week after the procedure then switch to Tylenol for pain control.
- Do not take Aspirin, Ibuprofen, Motrin or Aleve for the week before and the first week after surgery.
- You will probably have drains after your procedure.
- Drains are typically removed within one week.

#### □ Drain Care:

- 1) Clean drain holes daily and apply bacitracin ointment (**Starting after your first shower**)
- 2) Keep drain pinned to binder to prevent pulling on them.
- 3) University of Virginia Plastic Surgery's RN will typically remove the drain when the fluid collection is less than 35 mL over 24 hours

- Prescription pain medication may be constipating. To help prevent constipation increase your intake of fluids and fibers. You may also take stool softeners as needed (see constipation sheet).
- Not all patients are given antibiotics after this procedure. If you are given antibiotics, take until gone.

#### Postoperative Appointment Information:

- If your first postoperative appointment was not made at the time of your preoperative appointment University of Virginia Plastic Surgery would typically like to see you back for your first postoperative visit one to two weeks after your surgery. This date will be given to you before your discharge from the recovery room. If an appointment is not made at your preoperative appointment or in the recovery room, please call the office the day after your surgery to schedule that appointment.

#### General Information:

- Numbness involving the lower abdominal wall is not uncommon and may resolve in 2-6 months.
- Swelling of the pubic area is also common after this procedure and will resolve over a few months.
- Your belly button may be dark colored and different shape after the procedure
- Call the clinic if you notice severe swelling, significant increase in pain, redness at the operative site, fever >101 degrees, drain bulbs filling more than 300 ml in 24 hour period, persistent nausea or vomiting or other questions or concerns