

# Abdominoplasty or Major Abdominal Wall and Hernia Repair

---

## Instructions for Before and After Surgery

- . Do not plan surgery at this time if you plan to have more children in the future. All the risks, discomfort, recovery, time off work, and fine results will be for nothing. Wait until your family is completed.
- . You must arrange for a responsible adult, a loved one for example, to stay with you at least 2 weeks at home after surgery. You will need care at home and will not be able to do child-care, cooking, laundry, driving, etc. Plan to be a 'couch-potato' and rest for at least 2 weeks, only getting up to walk in the house, or down the block and back with someone walking with you at all times. A fall could make you bleed and cause severe complications.
- . Do not take Aspirin, aspirin-containing products, Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil), or Vitamin E for 2 weeks before or after your surgery.
- . Smokers are not offered surgery, no smoking; avoid second-hand smoke for 2 weeks before and after surgery.
- . A bladder catheter is placed during surgery, and is usually removed the first day after surgery. You will have at least 2 drainage tubes after surgery. Your nurse will teach you and your family how to empty the drainage, and how to record amounts of drainage, (see Drain Care Instruction Sheet). The drains will be removed in our Clinic within 1-2 weeks after surgery.
- . Abdominal discomfort is variable after surgery. Pain medication will be given to you. Take this medication with food to prevent stomach upset.
- . After surgery, you will be placed in an abdominal binder for gentle support. This is not to be tight, only lightly, loosely applied to give you a sense of protection. You will lie in bed in a flexed position (head elevated 45 degrees and knees bent comfortably). You will have stockings and electronic sloth squeezers on your legs to prevent you having blood clots in the legs or clots traveling to the lungs (embolus). It is still very important for you to move your knees, ankles and legs, to dangle your legs over the side of the bed, and then to walk after surgery as instructed. Physical therapy may assist you getting out of bed and walking slightly bent over a front wheel walker.

- . When walking the first 1- 2 weeks, you must walk bent over 15-30 degrees, to take painful pulling off of the snug belly repair. You should plan to lie on a sofa, recliner chair, or in bed, on a foam wedge 30 degrees elevation (available at medical supply or bedding supply stores), with pillows under the knees. When not reclined, plan to walk bent over. You will straighten up, usually within 2 weeks, and no longer feel you need the support of the walker.
- . You need to protect your belly, and the fragile skin at the incision. No sitting upright in a chair for meals (only for using the bathroom for short times), no driving, no leaning over, no lifting anything heavier than your dinner plate, no housework, no reaching above the head or behind you, no laundry or housework, for at least 3 weeks. These can make you bleed, and folds across the skin with sitting can kill the lovely skin.
- . Keep your surgical incisions and dressings dry. At your first clinic visit we will change the dressing, perhaps remove the drains.
- . Expect some numbness of abdominal skin and incisions for up to 2 years. Much sensation will return in 1 year.
- . Expect to be off work for a minimum of 3 weeks. Usually, it takes at least 3 weeks to feel strong and flexible enough to drive, sit, and do your job. If your job requires more strenuous activity, plan to be off work 6 weeks.
- . You can expect to feel tired or worn out during the first 2 weeks or more after surgery, as your body uses lots of your stored protein and iron to heal the operated belly. Vitamins and a good diet can help. Allow extra time for rest, and take naps!

**For questions or concerns, such as pain, drainage or fever, contact the Plastic Surgery Clinic:**

**Antioch Medical Center (925) 813-6330, after hours (925) 813-3100**

**Walnut Creek Medical Center (925) 295-5885, after hours (925) 295-4070**

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor. If you have questions or need more information about your medication, please speak to your pharmacist. Kaiser Permanente does not endorse the medications or products mentioned. Any trade names listed are for easy identification only.