

# HEARTLAND PLASTIC —| & HAND SURGERY |—

J. STEWART HUMPHREY, M.D.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING YOUR ABDOMINOPLASTY (TUMMY TUCK)

1. **ALWAYS WASH HANDS THOROUGHLY BEFORE TOUCHING OR CARING FOR SURGICAL SITE**
2. Avoid strenuous activity, lifting more than 10 pounds, and ALL exercise for 6 weeks after surgery or until cleared in clinic. If in doubt, ask in clinic before proceeding.
3. Do NOT bend at the waist or turn and twist at the waist.
4. Strip and record the drain outputs separately on the provided form every 4-6 hours. Keep the bulbs fully compressed at all times. Bring the output record to your appointments. The drains will remain in place for 1-3 weeks. Better compliance with instructions and limitations typically shortens the time drains are needed. It is common to have drainage on the bandages and around the drain sites. Do not be alarmed by this.
5. Do NOT take the prescription pain medicine on an empty stomach. You should have a meal or a heavy snack 5-10 minutes before taking pain medicine. This dramatically decreases the likelihood of nausea or vomiting.
6. Avoid exposure to extremes of environmental temperatures. Minimize unnecessary car trips and errands.
7. You should be up and moving about your home every few hours. This is important to decrease the risk of blood clots forming in the legs.
8. You may remove the dressings, except for small tape strips on the incisions if present, and take a lukewarm shower in \_\_\_\_ hours. Thereafter, shower twice daily. Wash over the incisions, drain sites, and tape strips if present with warm soapy water. DO NOT REMOVE them. If you have yellow gauze on the incision, REMOVE it. Blot the area dry with a clean towel. Reapply the binder low and tight. You may find applying it over a cotton T-shirt is more comfortable. Use absorbent dressings as necessary over the drain exit points. DO NOT TAKE TUB BATHS OR OTHERWISE BE IN WATER.
9. You should wear the binder at all times unless showering until cleared in clinic.
10. You should sleep in a reclining chair flexed at the waist for several days after surgery. Alternatively, in a bed you may place several pillows under your head and several under your legs to decrease the abdominal tension. It is best to avoid standing completely straight at the waist until a week or two out from surgery.
11. While recovering from surgery, you should walk inside your home every few hours while awake to decrease the risk of developing blood clots in your legs or lungs.
12. Take your antibiotics and pain medicine as directed.
13. **DO NOT TAKE ANY ASPIRIN CONTAINING COMPOUNDS OR ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES FOR 3 WEEKS AFTER SURGERY. This increases the risk of bleeding.**
14. **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS TO REPORT TO YOUR DOCTOR: 573-334-4263**
  - a. Temperature over 101 degrees Fahrenheit.
  - b. Sudden increase in abdominal swelling and tightness.
  - c. Any unusual symptoms.