

Frequently Asked Questions After Body Contouring Surgery

What are some typical signs & symptoms to be aware of after a tummy tuck and/or liposuction?

- Pain and discomfort: tingling, burning or intermittent shooting pain. Pain medication and muscle relaxants will help you cope with any discomfort. Consistent sharp pain should be reported to our office.
- Hypersensitivity of skin or lack of sensitivity: This is normal and will gradually resolve over time.
- Bruising/swelling: It is normal for bruising and swelling to worsen and peak around 72 hours. It may also track downward to extremities.
- Shiny skin or an itchy feeling: Swelling can cause the skin to appear shiny. As the healing process advances, you may also find a mild to severe itchy feeling of the skin. An antihistamine like Benadryl can help to alleviate severe, constant itchiness. If the skin becomes red and hot to the touch, contact our office.

When should I call the office?

- A high fever (over 101.5°), severe nausea and vomiting, continued dizziness or incoherent behavior, such as hallucinations
- 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 (however, it is normal after liposuction to have some blood-tinged oozing from the incision sites for 48-72 hours)
- Shortness of breath, difficulties breathing, rapid heartbeat
- Leg or calf swelling, pain, or tenderness that is asymmetrical
- Severe anxiety or depression

When can I take my next dose of pain medication, muscle relaxant, or anti-nausea medicine?

- Refer to your discharge instructions to see when the last dose was given. Narcotic pain medication can be taken every 4-6 hours, Tylenol every 6 hours, Gabapentin nightly, muscle relaxants every 8 hours, and anti-nausea every 8 hours.

What should I eat?

- Eat soft, bland, nutritious food for the first 24 hours then advance as tolerated. You may also notice that you have a decreased appetite or become full faster. Fluids are important following surgery. Stick to non-carbonated, non-alcoholic, caffeine-free beverages including fruit juices and water, milk and yogurt drinks. You should drink at least 8 ounces of fluid every 2-3 hours.

Why is my mouth dry?

- It is normal after general anesthesia to experience dry mouth. It can also be worsened using Gabapentin (nerve pain reliever). If dry mouth persists, you can use over the counter Biotene. Make sure to continue drinking plenty of fluids.

Why am I so sleepy?

- It is normal after general anesthesia to feel groggy, confused, chilly, nauseated, scared, alarmed, or emotional. It can take 48 hours for the effects of general anesthesia to subside. Your body is also using a lot of energy to heal and you may tire easily.

Why can't I go to the bathroom?

- It is normal after general anesthesia to have difficulty urinating. Make sure you're drinking plenty of fluids. Try running water as background noise, or even placing your hand in water. If you have not

urinated within 8 hours after surgery and have discomfort or inability to urinate despite feeling the urge, contact our office.

- It is also normal to experience sluggish bowels after general anesthesia combined with the use of narcotic pain relievers. Try to limit your post-operative narcotic use if tolerable. You should also be taking a stool softener (ie Colace) twice daily. If you are prone to constipation, you can begin taking a laxative immediately after surgery (ie Dulcolax, Miralax, Smooth Move Tea). If you have not had a bowel movement by 72 hours after surgery, try drinking Magnesium Citrate; drink half the bottle, wait 6 hours, then drink the other half if you still have not had a bowel movement. If you still have not had a bowel movement within 12 hours, you may drink a 2nd bottle of Magnesium Citrate and subsequently an over the counter enema if 2nd bottle hasn't worked within 12 hours.

Why do I need drains and how long will I have them?

- Your drain works by suction from the compressed bulb. This removes fluid from the surgical site and assists in wound healing. If you have a drain with a standard tummy tuck, it is usually in place on average for 10-14 days, but it can be longer. Drains with a tummy tuck 360 are usually in place on average for 2-4 weeks, but it can be longer. The drainage fluid will progress through a spectrum of colors starting with bloody fluid and slowly changing to a clear/yellow color. Refer to our website for a video on drain care instructions.
- Notify us if:
 - Drain falls out
 - Drain becomes clogged
 - Copious amounts of fluid around drain site (normal to have some oozing at the drain site since it's not a completely closed system)
 - Bulb does not stay flat after reactivating

When can I shower after surgery?

- 24 hours. At that time, you will remove any bulky dressings (gauze and white tape) and/or Tegaderm dressings (thin, Saran wrap in appearance), leave the steri-strips (white tape that will be underneath dressings) on, and get in the shower. Tegaderm dressings covering drain insertion sites should be left in place. For tummy tuck patients, you will also have a Tegaderm dressing covering your belly button and a green ear plug or yellow gauze inside the belly button that should stay in place until your first post-op appointment. However, if it does not stay in place, you can begin applying a thin layer of antibiotic ointment (ie. Neosporin) to the belly button incision with a Q tip twice daily. You can shower as you normally would and do not need to continue using antibacterial/surgical soap as it can be irritating to the skin. Soap can run over the steri-strips. Pat the steri-strips dry after the shower. Replace compression garment after showering.

How long should I keep wearing the compression garment after surgery?

- For the first 6 weeks, 24/7, except while showering. The purpose of the garment is to help minimize swelling. You may have foam placed in your garment for added compression; we recommend wearing the foam if tolerable, but it is not mandatory after the first 48 hours. **IF** your garment feels too tight (making creases in your skin, making it difficult to take deep breaths, or is causing pain that makes you unable to sleep) – remove the foam and put garment on loosest hook. If it is still too tight, contact your Restora nurse to request a larger size.

Will I get another compression garment?

- You may purchase more at your first post op. You may also switch to a Spanx garment around 6 weeks post-op.

IN THE EVENT OF AN AFTER-HOURS EMERGENCY, CALL THE SURGEON'S OFFICE NUMBER AND/OR AFTER HOURS NUMBER AND FOLLOW THE PROMPTS TO BE PUT IN CONTACT WITH THE NURSE OR DOCTOR ON CALL.