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Care after Liposuction

This page contains answers to frequently asked questions regarding your care after liposuction. This information will help you to remember the instructions given to you after surgery.

What will I see when I look into a mirror?

You will have a surgical compression garment and foam dressings in place. **You are to leave all dressings in place until the first post op follow up appointment.** *Expect considerable drainage* from the areas that underwent liposuction. It may look bloody the first couple days and will drain with changes in position. The drainage decreases significantly after the first couple post op days. It will be messy, so I recommend to take precautions to protect your bedding for the first couple of days.

When can I shower or take a bath?

I ask that no showers are taken until the first follow up appointment when the dressings are removed. (sponge baths are fine) Any residual surgical soap (yellow) can be gently removed with rubbing alcohol.

What can I do after surgery?

I encourage you to be as active as possible in the first few days after surgery. *Wiggle your toes* to keep blood circulating to your legs when you are sitting or lying in bed.

Mild physical exercise can be resumed as soon as you are able. *Walking short distances is fine*, but I encourage you to refrain from heavy exercise until we discuss this at your follow up visit.

How long will I have to wear my compression garment?

You will need to wear your compression garment continuously until your initial post op visit. After your first post op visit you will be able to take the compression garment off when you shower and reapply it immediately after showering. You will need to keep your initial compression garment on 24 hours a day for the first 2 weeks and then you may change to a second stage garment or you may keep your initial post op garment which you will wear for 2 more weeks, longer if you have any prolonged swelling.

When can I drive?

You generally should be able to drive in about 5-7 days after surgery if you feel up to it. You should not drive if you are still taking narcotic pain medication.

How much pain will I have?

The most discomfort that you will have lasts 5-7 days, sometimes longer. As you feel more comfortable, your need for medication will be less.

What medication should I use?

I will prescribe a narcotic pain medication for you to use as needed. Follow the directions on the bottle for their use. Do not take any extra Tylenol while on the narcotic pain medication. In two days, it is recommended you take 600-800mg of ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) every 6-8 hours as needed.

Can I drink alcohol?

Do not drink alcohol for 5-7 days after your surgery or while taking narcotic pain medication.

When will I be seen in the office after surgery?

You will normally be seen within 5-7 days after surgery and should be scheduled by calling my office at 216-778-4450 if it has not already been arranged

How will I know if I am having a problem?

Urgent problems after liposuction surgery do not occur frequently. These are complications that will require a change in your post-operative care:

Nausea that lasts more than four hours and does not respond to medication

Bleeding that is persistent and uncontrolled

High fever lasting more than four hours, not relieved with medication

Leg swelling with or without associated pain may indicate a problem with the vein circulation in your leg(s). If you have a large amount of leg swelling (either in one or both legs) or if you experience pain in your legs, contact the office immediately.

Breathing problems after liposuction are rare but can be a serious complication. If you develop any chest pain or feeling of shortness of breath you must contact my office or be seen in the nearest emergency facility without delay.

Medication reactions may occur with any drugs prescribed for you. If you develop a skin rash, itching, vomiting, or diarrhea, stop taking your medication and call the office.

**If you have any of the above problems or other questions, contact my office.
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