



TOTONCHI
PLASTIC SURGERY

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Care after Body Lift

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

What will I see when I look into a mirror?

You will have mild bruising and swelling of the abdominal and lower back skin. There may be a “ruffled” appearance to the closure. This is normal and will flatten with time. It will be difficult to stand up straight for several days, and your abdomen and buttocks will feel tight. The contour of your waist area will not take its final shape for several weeks after the surgery.

When can I shower or take a bath?

You may not shower until after your first post op visit which is generally scheduled 5-7 days after surgery. Your original dressings and binder from surgery should remain on until your scheduled post op follow up appointment. You may sponge bath but no showers until your drains are removed.

How do I care for my drains?

Your drains are held in place with stitches to your skin and should always be supported to avoid pulling on the drain. The easiest method is to safety pin the drain bulb to your abdominal binder or secured with the Velcro strap given with the binder. Monitor your drain output and record 24-hour totals. Bring the drain record with you at the first post op visit. The “How to care for your drain” pamphlet has more detailed information. Drains are generally removed within 7 to 10 days after your surgery.

Should I wear a support garment?

For your comfort, we recommend that you wear a support garment for 12 weeks following your surgery, removing the garment only for bathing. You will wear your first stage compression garment until your first post op visit without removing it, and then you can remove the garment for showering only after the drains are removed. You will wear the first stage compression for 4-6 weeks and then convert to a second stage

garment. Most patients find that a spandex or Lycra waist and tummy shaping garment are most comfortable to wear as a second stage garment. We will advise you of your garment options before surgery and again at your post-operative visits. After 12 weeks, you may discontinue all support garments.

What can I do after surgery?

You will gradually be able to stand upright over the first week. Many patients find it easier to sleep in a recliner for a few days after the surgery. You should walk every day, but have someone assist you for the first few days. You should not lift anything heavier than five pounds or participate in heavy exercise for six weeks after the surgery. After six weeks, gradually return to your normal activities and exercise routines. Depending on the type of work you do, you should be able to return to your job in 3-4 weeks or as soon as you are comfortable. If your job does not require heavy activity, you should be able to go back in three weeks.

When can I drive?

You generally should be able to drive about 7 days after surgery if you feel comfortable. You should never drive if you are still taking prescription pain medication.

How much pain will I have?

The most discomfort that you will have lasts 5 days, sometimes a little longer. As you feel more comfortable, your need for prescription pain medication will lessen.

What medications should I use?

We will prescribe a pain medication for you and we may also have you take an antibiotic. Follow the directions on the bottle for their use. The pain medication may make you feel drowsy, so please have someone assist you at home, and do not attempt to drive while you are taking prescription pain medication. 5-7 days after surgery, most patients will find that Tylenol will take care of the discomfort. Do not use aspirin or ibuprofen (Motrin) for 7-10 days after surgery.

Can I drink alcohol?

Do not drink alcohol for five days after your surgery or while taking prescription pain medicines.

When will I be seen in the office after surgery?

You will normally be seen in the office within one week of your surgery and then at about two, four, six weeks, three months, and six months after surgery to monitor healing. Additional appointments may be necessary.

How will I know if I am having a problem?

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

Hematoma (blood collecting under your incisions) can occur within a few days of your surgery.

The warning signs are:

- Severe pain that does not respond to medication
- Significant swelling in your abdomen or buttocks
- Excessive or growing bruising

Infection is rare following body lift. It is normal to have a small amount of drainage from the incisions and around your belly button for a few days. Signs of infection are:

- Increased temperature
- Increasing drainage from the incisions
- Increasing redness around the incisions

Leg swelling (with or without associated pain) may indicate a problem with the vein circulation in your leg(s). Although some swelling is to be expected due to your surgery, intravenous fluids given to you during the surgery and your decreased level of activity, this swelling is normally mild, painless, and affects both legs evenly. If you have a large amount of leg swelling (either one or both legs), or if you experience pain in your legs, contact the office immediately.

Breathing problems after a body lift are rare but can be a serious complication. If you develop any chest and/or back pain or shortness of breath, you must contact our office or be seen in the nearest emergency medical facility without delay.

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

If you have any of the above problems or other questions, contact my office at 440-461-7999