



POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Remember, still NO SMOKING! Smoking can result in a lack of blood supply to tissues and fat causing tissue death or delayed wound healing. Even 0% nicotine vapes contain a trace amount of nicotine that the FDA accepts as 0%. Smoking can resume 6 weeks after surgery if no challenges in healing are present.

HAVE SOMEONE WITH YOU:

o After surgery, have an adult available to stay with you for the first 24 – 48 hours, as you will be weak and drowsy.

WALKING:

o It is important to get out of bed early and often after your surgery (with assistance) to prevent postoperative problems. It is good to walk for 15 – 20 minutes 6 times per day or get up every hour to walk to the restroom and back. This encourages blood flow throughout your legs to reduce the chance of blood clot development.

o IF YOU HAVE SHORTNESS OF BREATH, LEG SWELLING, AND/OR LEG PAIN AT ANY POINT IN YOUR POSTOPERATIVE HEALING, PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE.

PAIN MEDICATION:

We will provide every patient with 1 refill of the pain medication if needed one week after the last prescription was filled. No additional refills will be provided. If you require additional pain medication, please reach out to your primary care provider for pain management or visit an urgent care as we will not provide additional refills after the 1 allotted refill.

- o Percocet (Oxycodon + Acetaminophen) or Vicodin (Hydrocodone + Acetaminophen) should be taken as directed:
 - o Mild to moderate pain: 1 tablet every 4 – 6 hours as needed
 - o Severe pain: 2 tablets every 4 – 6 hours as needed
 - o If your pain is mild, or if you do not like the effects of the narcotics, you can take Tylenol® (Acetaminophen) 1000mg every 8 hours (which would be 2 tablets of the Extra Strength Tylenol®, purchased over the counter). Please do not exceed 3000mg in a 24-hour period.
- o Take pain medication with food.
- o Take a stool softener with pain medication to prevent constipation.
- o DO NOT DRINK ALCOHOL WHILE TAKING PAIN MEDICATIONS or Valium. This can be a deadly combination.
- o Only take the pain medication if needed. The quicker you can wean off the pain

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medication, the better you will feel and heal.

- o IF YOU ARE PRONE TO NAUSEA OR MOTION SICKNESS, let Dr. Widmyer know. Medications can also be prescribed to prevent nausea at home.

SUPPLEMENTS:

- o Do not take aspirin (or products containing aspirin), anti-inflammatory medications, or Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Midol®) for 3 weeks after surgery. Also do not begin herbal supplements until 3 weeks after surgery.
- o Arnica, Bromelain and Vitamin C are okay to take. Arnica and Bromelain are very beneficial post op with bruising and swelling.
- o Phentermine or appetite suppressants should not be taken until 6 weeks after surgery as these supplements increase heart rate and blood pressure and can interfere with your recovery.

REMEMBER THE FIVE W'S:

The **most common cause of an elevated temperature/fever after surgery is due to collapse of the lungs** (atelectasis). This is a **normal occurrence because of anesthesia and the physical stress your body is undergoing**. To decrease your body temperature and expand the lungs, it is important to do the following:

1. **Wind:** Take 10 deep breaths per hour for the first 72 hours.
2. **Water:** Dehydration can also cause an increase in body temperature. It is important that you remain hydrated since surgery can deplete your body of water. 64 ounces of water a day is encouraged.
3. **Walk:** Get up and walk once every hour to keep your blood moving. This is key for preventing a blood clot.
4. **Wonder drugs:** Take your pain medication or Tylenol® as needed. An increase in pain can cause an increase in body temperature.
5. **Wound:** Observe the wound for redness, heat, discharge (pus), and openings.

SLEEPING:

- o While resting in bed, stack at least 2 – 3 pillows behind your back. This position minimizes the tension upon your new surgical closure. You can also add a small pillow under your knees to help with relief of lower back pain. You can also use an airport pillow around your neck while sleeping so that you can comfortably put your head from side to side and have some neck support.
- o Sleep on your back with your head elevated about 30 degrees. These instructions aid in the quality of your scars. Sleep in this position for 1 week. After 1 week, you may sleep flat on your back.
- o You may resume side sleeping after 6 weeks. Stomach sleeping is not recommended and is discouraged.
- o You may lie on your stomach if getting a massage 6 months after surgery.

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SHOWERING:

- o You may shower (but not bathe) in 48 hours (unless Dr. Widmyer instructs you to wait) even with drains. You can wear a belt in the shower to hang your drains.
- o Do not allow the showerhead to face the surgical area for the first week—the pressure of the water on your incision might be painful. Allow the water to run down your back and trickle forward. If you do not have a handheld showerhead, you may use a cup or Tupperware® to splash the surgical area with water while showering. Post Op do not use any soap on your incisions and use lukewarm, never hot. Do not use surgical soaps to wash the area as these are drying to the skin.
- o Remove all your garments and dressings when showering.
- o When out of the shower, pat dry and/or blow dry incisions on a cooler setting and apply new dressings if necessary but **leave tapes in place** (non-stick pads along surgical area to cover incisions) and a supportive front closure bra (if you have had breast surgery) .
- o Make sure someone is with you at your first shower. Make the shower a quick one.

DRIVING:

- o DO NOT DRIVE WHILE TAKING PAIN MEDICATION. These medications can result in drowsiness. If you are pulled over while driving under the influence of narcotics or scheduled substances, you will get a DUI.
- o Driving may be resumed when a sharp turn of the steering wheel will not cause pain; this is usually within 5 – 7 days. Driving may resume when you are no longer taking the narcotic pain medication.

DIET:

- o A light diet is best after surgery. Begin by taking liquids slowly and progress to soups or Jell-O.
- o You may start a regular diet the next day.
- o Though it is impossible to get rid of gas entirely, there are strategies to reduce it. Eat and drink slowly, chew thoroughly and cut down on carbonated drinks. Avoid sugar-free gums and sugar-free candies that contain sorbitol or xylitol – both sweeteners are poorly digested and can result in bloating.
- o Stay on a soft diet, high in protein, for 2 – 3 days and avoid spicy food which can cause nausea and gas. Then you may resume a normal, high protein diet.

EXERCISE:

- o No overheating or sweating for the first 6 weeks (spas, exercising in the sun, etc).
- o Do not lift anything heavier than 10 lbs. for the first 6 weeks.
- o Cardio may resume at 6 weeks following surgery unless Dr. Widmyer instructs differently.

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- o If you have had breast surgery and running on a treadmill, please wear two sports bras.
- o You may begin swimming 6 weeks post-op if incisions are fully closed and healing is complete.

DRAINS (if you are given drains):

- o Keep your drainage bulbs collapsed and record time and amounts of drainage over a 24-hour period. All patients heal differently according to many factors. Generally, the drains will be removed when the drainage is 30 cc or less in a 24- hour period, which usually occurs in 7 – 14 days.
- o Empty drains on a schedule. You can choose to empty the drains and record the value three times a day (every 8 hours), twice a day (every 12 hours), or if not producing too much fluid, once a day at the same time. Please bring your drain information to every visit.
- o 24 hours before POST OP appointment, be sure to not empty your drains so that Dr. Widmyer can see how much fluid you have collected in a 24-hour period, unless the drains are full and you need to empty them.
- o It is normal for your drain sites to leak fluid for the first few days. Do not be alarmed if this happens. You can place ABD pads or maxi pads on groin at drain site to collect draining fluid.
- o It is normal for drain site to sting or ache a bit or for one drain to drain more or less than the other.
- o It is normal for over-activity to result in more drainage.
- o It is normal for stringy and thicker clots to appear in your drain bulb.
- o Do **NOT** remove your drains on your own.

SUTURES:

- o Do not apply anything on your incisions for 3 weeks unless directed by Dr. Widmyer. Keep the incisions clean and dry.
- o 3 – 6 weeks after all sutures have been removed (or when all of your scabs have fallen off), you can begin scar treatment.

TAPES:

- o Leave all tapes in place after surgery. Do **not** remove them. Dr. Widmyer will replace tapes as necessary Post Op. You may replace gauze if needed.

SCAR THERAPY:

All incisions will be extremely sensitive to sunlight during the healing phase. Direct sun contact or tanning booths are to be avoided for 6 months. Use a sunscreen with SPF of 15 with UVA and UVB protection for at least 6 months. We recommend Mederma Scar Gel, Bio-Oil Skincare Oil, or Coco Butter. We also sell Silagen Scar Refinement Gel in our office.

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WHAT TO EXPECT:

- o Sensations like numbness, sharpness, burning, and shooting pains at the surgical site or surrounding areas are common during the healing process and can take up to 9 months to a year to resolve. These sensations may last several weeks and will gradually disappear. The sensations can radiate to your back and even down your arm. This is expected and normal.
- o Moderate swelling is to be expected. Be patient. The swelling will gradually subside and you will be back to normal in 3 – 6 months. Swelling will be at its worst between 3 – 5 days. Swelling starts to subside at 6 weeks but may take 6 months to resolve.
- o Bruising is a normal expectation following surgery. Bruising could be apparent for as long as 3 – 4 weeks afterwards. The bruises will move down your body as they are absorbed.
- o It takes at least 6 MONTHS FOR FINAL RESULTS to appear.

In the interim, you may notice:

- o Incision asymmetry
- o Surgical site asymmetry
- o Nipple and areolar asymmetry (if breast surgery)
- o Pleating along incisions.
- o Hardness along incision line
- o Swelling and breast shape that changes from day-to-day
- o Be patient please and try not to focus on these issues before the 6-month period

TIPS FOR ALL SURGERIES:

- o **It is VERY important to leave all tapes dry, and in place Post OP.**
- o **Wear compression garments and/or sports bras at ALL TIMES or as directed by Dr. Widmyer. This will keep the swelling down and allows the tissue to heal in the intended place, as well as keeps pressure off your incisions.**
- o **Do not sweat and do not lift anything heavier than 10 pounds for 6 weeks. As the weeks progress, you will be released to do more activities and wear compression less.**
- o **Do not pick at sutures or open wounds, do not pop blood blisters. Do not poke at, touch or mess with your incisions. Almost all sutures are dissolvable. Weeks 6-8 are when you might notice your incisions may have become red and irritated. This is normal. Your body is trying to accept and dissolve them or push them out. If any have poked out, we can address them at your next office visit. Any skin irritations, you may apply a thin layer of Bacitracin and cover with gauze.**
- o **Sensations like burning, numbness, sharpness and shooting pains at the surgical site or surrounding areas are common during the healing process and may take up to a year to resolve. If you have had breast surgery, these sensations may also radiate down your back or even down your arm. This is also expected and normal.**
- o **Do not take your own drains out.**

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How well your body heals Post Op, is how you treat it during recovery. Be patient with the healing process. You have had surgery and need to be gentle with yourself and on your body.

POSITIONING AND ARM MOVEMENTS FOR ALL BREAST SURGERIES

**Including Augmentation, Mastopexy, Reduction, Reconstruction, Capsulectomy, Explants
(Breast Reconstruction & Capsulectomy/Explant with Mastopexy will have drains:**

- o For the first 48 hours keep your arm movements to a minimum. Your arms should not be used to support your body or lift anything heavy. Do not push with your arms to lift yourself in bed.
- o The first 3 weeks after your surgery are the most crucial as far as limiting the use of your arms. The elbows should essentially stay against your body. This means no lifting your arms above your shoulders, no lifting objects, no housework, no physical exercise, etc. WE CANNOT STRESS HOW IMPORTANT THIS IS.
- o Think of yourself as a “zombie” or a “T-Rex” in terms of arm position. You should not raise your arms higher than shoulder level or abduct your arms (raise your arms sideways away from your body) for 3 weeks after surgery.
- o Lifting your arms up/out or lifting heavy objects can result in injury to your breast pocket, pain, additional swelling, or hematoma. If you experience sudden increase in swelling to one breast (doubling in size) with extreme pain, warmth, redness, and elevation in pulse please contact our office to rule out a breast hematoma.
- o For Breast Augmentation & Breast Reconstruction, you will initially feel like your implants are too high, too flat, and too large. This will resolve over the first 4 – 6 weeks post operatively. They may initially resemble pancakes.
- o Gurgling and sloshing sounds or sensations from breasts are normal. The noise is produced from air and fluid trapped in the breast pocket and/or expander. It will subside over time in implants not expanders.

WHAT TO EXPECT FOR ABDOMINOPLASTY (Will have drains):

- o Abdominal bloating is to be expected in the early postoperative period. Bloating results from sodium present in your medications and in the anesthesia.
- o Most patients report difficulty sleeping and difficulty with pain management the first night after surgery. This is usually secondary to the effects of anesthesia and should subside within 24-28 hours.
- o Moderate swelling of your abdomen is to be expected. You may find that your clothes may not fit as easily as before. Be patient. The swelling will gradually subside, and you will be back to normal in 3 – 6 months. Swelling will be at its worst between 3 – 5 days. Swelling starts to subside at 6 weeks but may take 6-12 months to resolve.
- o Bruising is a normal expectation following surgery. Bruising could be apparent for as long as 3 – 4 weeks afterwards. The bruises will move down your body as they are absorbed.
- o Because of the removal of tissue from your abdomen, there is a certain amount of tightness that is to be expected. This will slowly relax within 6 months.

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- o A large and swollen pubic area (we call this the “Ken Doll”) will occur postoperatively and will subside by 6 months from surgery.
- o It takes 6 MONTHS FOR FINAL RESULTS to appear.

In the interim, you may notice:

- o Incision asymmetry
 - o Abdominal asymmetry
 - o Umbilical asymmetry or malposition
 - o Pleating along incisions
 - o Swelling that changes from day-to-day
 - o Redness to incisions that may take 9 months to fade
- o Be patient please and try not to focus on these issues before the 6–12-month period.
 - o A burning sensation (raw, sensitive) or sharp shooting pains along the abdomen and incision line is normal and indicative of nerve regeneration. These “neuralgias” will burn out by 9-12 months.
 - o Numbness is expected to resolve by 9 months on average, sometimes longer.

COMPRESSION BINDER/GARMENT:

- o Wear the surgical binder (compression garment) that we have provided until your drains are removed. Once your drains are removed, please wear a compression garment for a total of 12 weeks following surgery.
- o Often times patients like to wear a muscle shirt or cami under the white compression binder provided to prevent rashes or itchy skin.
- o The garment is to be worn 24/7 for the first 4 weeks following surgery.
- o After 4 weeks, the garment is to be worn for 16 – 24 hrs./day daily for an additional 8 weeks.
- o Abdominal muscle exercises are highly discouraged for 3-4 months after surgery to protect the abdominal wall plication suture.

WHAT TO EXPECT FOR NECK/FACELIFT:

Avoid straining of any kind for the first 5 days. Avoid turning your head to either side as this will pull on the stitch lines. To turn, move your head and shoulders as a unit.

- o Facial movements (smiling, talking, chewing, yawning, etc.) should be kept to a minimum for the first week. Movements can disrupt suture lines or resulting in internal bleeding.
- o Apply covered ice bags or Swiss eye masks (keep them cold or in ice) to the exposed areas of your face for the first 48 hours to reduce swelling post-operatively. Do not remove head dressing at this time. You will have your head dressing removed the next day after your surgery.
- o You can expect some swelling of the face and eyes after surgery. If you develop acute onset of swelling on one side of your face or neck, which is definitely more pronounced than on the other side,



and if you are having EXCRUCIATING pain, contact our office.

CHIN STRAP:

o The chin compression garment should be worn for the first 7 days after surgery (24/7). After 7 days, then only at night from day 7 to day 14.

WHAT TO EXPECT FOR LIPOSUCTION:

POSITIONING:

o If you have had liposuction to your calves, ankles, thighs, or arms, you will notice that your feet and/or hands will become quite swollen the first few weeks following surgery. To aid with the swelling, it is highly encouraged that you attempt to elevate your legs and/or arms whenever sitting or lying in bed.

o **Leg liposuction:** If sitting on a sofa or bed, you can rest your legs on an ottoman or chair directly in front of you. If on a bed, rest your legs against the backboard or place pillows below your legs and knees to slightly elevate your legs.

o **Arm liposuction:** When sitting or lying down, place pillows under each arm in order to elevate your arms.

BINDER AND COMPRESSION GARMENTS:

o Wear the white surgical binder (compression garment), ACE bandages, or compression garments we provide that we provide until 3 days after surgery. After day 48 hours and after your first shower, please wear a compression garment for a total of 12 weeks following surgery.

o Often times patients like to wear a muscle shirt or cami under the compression binder provided to prevent rashes or itchy skin.

o The garment is to be worn 24/7 for the first 4 weeks following surgery.

o After 4 weeks, the garment is to be worn for 16 – 24 hrs./day daily for an additional 8 weeks.

o Abdominal bloating is to be expected in the early postoperative period. Bloating results from sodium present in your medications and in the anesthesia.

o Most patients report difficulty sleeping and difficulty with pain management the first night after surgery. This is usually secondary to the effects of anesthesia and should subside within 24-28 hours.

o The body retains fluids in response to surgery so do not expect to see any immediate weight loss for the first 2-3 weeks. In the long run you will see more of a change in the way your clothes fit than a decrease in pounds.

o Swelling and bruising are a normal expectation following surgery. Bruising could be apparent for as long as 3 - 4 weeks afterwards. The bruises will move down your body as they are absorbed.

o Massage to the surgical sites will help increase circulation and alleviate the hardness felt underneath the skin. Massage can begin 4 days after surgery.

o A lymphatic massage therapist might be a good idea. 2-3 times per week for 3 – 4 weeks. This

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allows for enhanced lymph drainage and for enhanced resolution of the swelling associated with liposuction.

- o It is normal to have an itching sensation and/or numbness following surgery in the areas that underwent liposuction. This will gradually subside over the next 2-3 months.
- o It takes at least 6 MONTHS FOR FINAL RESULTS to appear.

WHAT TO EXPECT FOR AN OTOPLASTY:

- o Temporary throbbing, aching, swelling, redness and numbness.
- o Large pressure dressings/bandages are applied around the ears and head, turban style immediately after surgery.
- o Some swelling and bruising may last 10-14 days. Swelling will vary patient-to-patient. Swelling may actually increase the first three to four days before subsiding. Most of your swelling should resolve over the first two to three weeks. Do expect, however, to have minor fluctuations in the remaining swelling over the course of the next two to three months.
- o Things to do to minimize this swelling include keeping your head elevated as much as possible over the first two to three weeks, avoiding bending over or heavy lifting for the first three weeks, and avoiding prolonged sun exposure for the first two to three months.
- o Some numbness may exist around the operative areas. Unusual sensations, pins and needles, and occasionally mild discomfort may occur as these nerves regenerate over time.
 - Tenderness could last up to 3 months.
 - Usually, there will be a faint scar in the back of the ear that will eventually fade.
- o Do not expect both ears to match perfectly, as perfect symmetry is unlikely and unnatural in ears.
- o It takes at least 6 MONTHS FOR FINAL RESULTS to appear.

WHAT TO EXPECT FOR AN BLEPAROPLASTY:

- o Tearing and dry eyes often occur after eyelid surgery. This will stop as the swelling subsides over the first several days.
- o Tightness of the eyelids is a normal feeling after surgery and may make it hard to close the eyelids completely. There may also be a feeling of numbness of the eyelids. Both sensations will subside with time.
- o Red discoloration and swelling of the whites of the eyes (which can be daunting in appearance) is normal as well. This is called chemosis. This is painless, will not harm your vision, and will disappear completely over time. Swelling may also cause the lower lid to pull away from the eye. This will subside as the swelling goes down.
- o If the chemosis is severe, I will prescribe a steroid eyedrop to help the inflammation disappear.
- o You will experience swelling after the surgery. Swelling is the accumulation of fluid which is the body's way of healing. The swelling will probably be at its worst on the 2nd or 3rd day after surgery. The swelling will gradually improve over subsequent weeks. Some residual swelling can last as long as 1 – 2 months.

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- o You should expect some slight oozing of blood from the incision site over the first 2 days. This is normal during the healing process.
- o Bruising around the eyes may last 1 – 2 weeks.
- o It takes 6 MONTHS FOR FINAL RESULTS to appear
- o A burning sensation (raw, sensitive) or sharp shooting pains along the incision line is normal and indicative of nerve regeneration. These “neuralgias” will burn out by 9-12 months.
- o Numbness is expected to resolve by 9-12 months on average.

You can expect some bleeding from the stitch lines and swelling of the eyelids. However, you should call the office if you have a continuous bloody drip, significantly more swelling on one side than the other, or any severe eye pain.

Smiling, yawning, or pulling on the eyelids should be avoided for 1 week after surgery. This is especially important the first few days following removal of the stitches.

If your eyes feel dry, use Refresh® Plus drops (available over the counter) in both eyes every 1 – 2 hours. All incisions will be extremely sensitive to sunlight during the healing phase. Direct sun is to be avoided.

SLEEPING POSITION:

After surgery it is best for you to keep your head elevated on a wedge headrest at a 45° angle when in bed for one week. You should also sleep in this position to minimize swelling to your eyes.

COLD/HOT COMPRESSES:

- o Use cold wet compresses on eyelids for at least the first 48 hours after surgery to reduce the amount of swelling you will have (make sure you keep these compresses cold and wet, and change them every 15-20 minutes). You can also make an “ice burrito” by wrapping a handful of crushed ice in a clean washcloth or small towel and then hold this wet cloth against the operated area gently.
- o After the third day, switch to hot compresses. Soak a washcloth in hot water. The water should be warm as tolerated (but not enough to burn the skin). Gently place this warm cloth against your eyes for 15 minutes 4 – 6 times per day

SHOWERING AND BEAUTY:

- o After the 3rd day after surgery, you can begin washing your face (but not your eyelids) gently with a mild soap and rinse with water. It will not hurt to get water on the stitches or in the eyes.
- o You can shower 3 days after surgery. Please leave the steri-strips on your eyelid incisions in place. Once out of the shower, you can blow dry your incisions on cool. o If the Steri Strips fall off, there is no need to replace them.
- o Contacts can be worn when the eyes start feeling normal and the majority of the swelling has subsided. This is approximately 2 weeks after surgery. Wear glasses until then. It is common to have blurred vision after your procedure as the cornea can swell – it can take a few weeks to resolve – be patient, it will go away.
- o Cosmetics can be worn on the face as early as 5 days after surgery. However, eyelid or eyelash cosmetics should NOT be worn until after the eyelid sutures have been removed.

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SUTURES: We use Prolene sutures which are made of a non-absorbable material. Sutures will be Removed 7 days after surgery depending on your healing progression.

WHAT TO EXPECT FOR BRACHIOPLASTY (Will have drains):

There will be a scar in the underarm area that may extend down to and around elbow; this scar will be hidden when your arm is against your body. We use Monocryl sutures on your arm incision (dissolvable). Suture ends will be trimmed at day 7.

Moderate swelling of your arms is to be expected. You may find that your clothes may not fit as easily as before. Be patient. The swelling will gradually subside, and you will be back to normal in 3 – 6 months. Swelling will be at its worst between 3 – 5 days. Swelling starts to subside at 6 weeks but may take 6 months to resolve.

- o Bruising is a normal expectation following surgery. Bruising could be apparent for as long as 3 – 4 weeks afterwards. The bruises will move down your body as they are absorbed.
- o Seepage and drainage from incision sites is expected for the first 72 hours.
- o It takes 6 MONTHS FOR FINAL RESULTS to appear. In the interim, you may notice:
 - o Incision asymmetry
 - o Arm asymmetry
 - o Pleating along your incision line
 - o Swelling that changes from day-to-day.
 - o Be patient please and try not to focus on these issues before the 6-month period.
- o A burning sensation (raw, sensitive) or sharp shooting pains along the surgical area and incision line is normal and indicative of nerve regeneration. These “neuralgias” will burn out by 9-12 months.
- o Numbness is expected to resolve by 9 months on average.
- o Hand swelling is normal. You may loosen up the ACE bandage if you find that your hands are starting to hurt. You can also wrap your hand with an ACE bandage should it become swollen and uncomfortable.

ARM COMPRESSION GARMENTS:

- o Wear the ACE bandage that we have provided until your first shower which is 48 hours after surgery. After your first shower, please wear an arm compression (required) garment for a total of 12 weeks following surgery.
- o We like the Marena compression garments which can be purchased online at <https://marenagroup.com/garmentstore/womens-recovery/vests-sleeves/>
- o Additional garments can be purchased online by typing “compression garment for arm lift” on Google, Amazon or at a medical supply store.
- o The garment is to be worn 24/7 for the first 4 weeks following surgery.
- o After 4 weeks, the garment is to be worn for 16 – 24 hrs/day daily for an additional 8 weeks.

WHAT TO EXPECT FOR A THIGH LIFT (Will have drains):

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Moderate swelling to the surgical area is to be expected. You may find that your clothes may not fit as easily as before. Be patient. The swelling will gradually subside and you will be back to normal in 3 – 6 months. Swelling will be at its worst between 3 – 5 days. Swelling starts to subside at 6 weeks but may take 6 months to resolve.

- o Bruising is a normal expectation following surgery. Bruising could be apparent for as long as 3 – 4 weeks afterwards. The bruises will move down your body as they are absorbed.

- o It takes 6-9 MONTHS FOR FINAL RESULTS to appear.

- o It is not uncommon for the sutures to rupture at the groin area. If this is to occur, we will not be able to suture the area closed as it may result in an infection. When wounds separate in this area, we encourage the area to heal on its own (from the inside out) with proper wound care. Apply Bacitracin and cover with gauze. Take great care when getting in and out of bed, in a chair or getting into and out of a car, so as to not create tension and rupture a suture line.

- o The groin area is typically very moist. To ensure optimal healing, please consider “airing the area out” by wearing flowy skirts and no undergarments. When at home or in your hotel, encourage drying of the area with a fan.

- o A burning sensation (raw, sensitive) or sharp shooting pains along the surgical areas and incision sites is normal and indicative of nerve regeneration. These “neuralgias” will burn out by 9-12 months.

- o Numbness is expected to resolve by 9-12 months on average.

SLEEPING/POSITIONING:

You can sleep on your back with your legs slightly elevated and open by placing pillows below your legs. The leg elevation will help minimize swelling to your ankles and feet. Sleep in this position for 1 week following surgery. To minimize swelling on your legs and feet, attempt to elevate your legs on an ottoman or chair when in a sitting position.

SUTURES:

- o We use Prolene sutures which are made of a non-absorbable material. Sutures will be removed between 12 - 14 days from surgery depending on your healing progression.

- o 3 – 4 weeks after all sutures have been removed (or when all of your scabs have fallen off), you can begin scar treatment.

COMPRESSION GARMENTS:

- o Wear the ACE bandage that we have provided until your first shower which is 48 hours after surgery. After your first shower, please wear an arm compression (required) garment for a total of 12 weeks following surgery.

- o We like the Marena compression garments which can be purchased online at <https://marena.com/collections/womens-post-surgical-bodysuits>

- o Additional garments can be purchased online by typing “compression garment for thigh lift” on Google, Amazon or at a medical supply store.

- o The garment is to be worn 24/7 for the first 4 weeks following surgery.

- o After 4 weeks, the garment is to be worn for 16 – 24 hrs/day daily for an additional 8 weeks.



COMMON COMPLICATIONS FROM SURGERIES:

SEROMAS:

About 20% of patients experience fluid build-up in the surgical area after the drains are removed. If this happens, you will notice a fullness or sloshy feeling in your surgical site. Seromas can also occur in when drains are not used.

- o Dr. Widmyer will assess the surgical site for this complication at your Post Op visit. If you are an out-of town patient and will be leaving before the 1-week period, it is your responsibility to ensure that your medical provider rules out a seroma at your suture removal appointment.

- o If a seroma is detectable (palpable or visible) then it can be treated through aspiration. Your medical provider (Dr. Widmyer or your local provider) will use a small needle and syringe to drain the fluid out of the surgical site through your incision which is typically numb.

- o A patient with a seroma may require additional aspirations. Typically, as a patient’s body heals, less fluid will be recruited into the area. A seroma will resolve within 3 - 6 weeks with appropriate treatment.

- o If a seroma does not continue to improve despite serial aspiration or is difficult to aspirate, your provider will send you for an ultrasound of the surgical area for ultrasonic guided aspiration or drain placement.

- o If a seroma persists for many months, surgical excision of the seroma cavity may be indicated (rare).

SPITTING SUTURES:

- o Spitting sutures are to be expected. Every patient will also have additional layers of dissolvable sutures under their skin. These dissolvable sutures (Monocryl sutures) can take up to 119 days to absorb under the skin. On occasion, you may see or feel what seems to be a fishing line material protruding from the incision. If this should happen to you, please trim the clear stitch at the skin using sterile scissors or plan to have them trimmed at your next visit at our office (or your local provider) so that it can be removed.

DELAYED WOUND HEALING:

- o Surgery can result in areas of separation at the incision sites or in areas of delayed wound healing well beyond the Post Op visit. Should this happen to you, contact our office. Typically, Bacitracin will need to be applied to the areas and covered with gauze.

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INFECTIONS:

Infections are most likely to take place between day 10-14 from surgery.

- o Symptoms and signs of infection include: Redness, warmth, fever, tenderness, pus, malaise.
- o Most infections, if detected early, can be treated with proper antibiotic therapy. In this case, Dr. Widmyer will call in an antibiotic as well and if necessary, a Mupirocin Antibiotic Ointment.

KELOIDS:

Keloids are firm, rubbery, lumpy lesions or shiny fibrous nodules on the skin that's usually raised. It often looks like liquid spilled on the skin and then hardened. When skin is injured, fibrous tissue called scar tissue forms over a wound to repair and protect the injury. In some cases, scar tissue grows excessively, forming smooth, hard growths called keloids.

An estimated 10 percent of people experience keloid scarring. If keloids are detected, your provider can:

- o Inject corticosteroids to the keloid to reduce inflammation (usually one injection every 6 weeks for up to four sessions).
- o Your local medical spa/dermatologist can perform laser treatments and/or micro needling to reduce scar tissue.
- o It is important to note that poor scarring can be secondary to a person's immune system.

HYPERBARIC OXYGEN THERAPY (HBOT):

- o Hyperbaric oxygen therapy is highly encouraged for all abdominoplasty, brachioplasty, thigh lift, facelift, breast reconstruction, and breast lift procedures.
- o HBOT will significantly improve your chances of optimal healing. HBOT decreases healing time by up to 50% by reducing reperfusion injury, swelling and inflammation.
- o HBOT also improves blood circulation, reduces pain, and upregulates collagen production.
- o 10 sessions are recommended.

If you are interested in scheduling an appointment locally, you can contact:

The Mikey Center- 674 S. Tamiami Trail, Osprey, FL 941-724-1861 or info@themikeycenter.net.

EMOTIONAL EXPECTATIONS FOLLOWING SURGERY:

- o It is not unusual for patients to undergo significant emotional "ups and downs" after any type of surgery. Factors such as underlying stress, medications, and/or psychological tendencies can result in patients experiencing a "postoperative depression" that generally resolves after a few weeks.
- o Having a partner, family member, or friend who is supportive can help with this process.

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Understanding the stages of emotional “ups and downs” can help patients stay calm and recover from this emotional process faster:

- o **Phase 1: Being Out of It:** Swelling and discomfort is most severe over the first few days after surgery. Pain medications also can make you disoriented and emotional.
- o **Phase 2: Mood Swings:** Having just had surgery, patients are adjusting to a sudden change in their appearance with much anticipation. The presence of bruising, swelling, and asymmetries will distort a patient’s results thereby concealing the final outcome. Mood swings (especially sadness), worry and depression are common emotions as a result. Patients may even ask, "What have I done?" or think that "I never should have done it."
- o **Phase 3: Being over critical:** During the second week, patients will probably be feeling a lot better. The swelling and muscle cramping/spasms will be decreasing, and sutures will be out. Because of anticipation, it is natural for patients to look critically at their new body worrying about symmetry, scars, and so on. At this point, it's normal to wonder if they have achieved their goal and what they paid for. This is too soon to tell, and most concerns are resolved with time.
- o **Phase 4: Happy at last:** Finally, about 3 – 6 months out of surgery, patients will probably start liking how they look and are feeling much better. They may be in the mood to check out some bathing suits or outfits to show off their new figure. Surgery is a process, trust the process.

CALL THE DOCTOR IF:

- o You have redness, increased pain at surgical incision sites, sudden increase in swelling, warmth, drainage (pus), inability to urinate within 8 to 10 hours, or oral temperature **greater than 101.5°F**.
- o A hematoma (abnormal bleeding under the skin that causes rapid and severe swelling and pain).
- o Please note, our office hours are Monday - Friday 9 AM to 5 PM. If you call or text after hours, we will try to return your call as soon as possible. If there is a medical emergency, please go to the emergency room.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, REMEMBER TO LISTEN TO YOUR BODY! Rest when you feel pain or fatigue. BE PATIENT with the healing process and remember you may have good and bad days.