

- Change your dressings daily as directed.
- If you have stitches, they will be removed in two weeks.
- Expect redness on the incision while your stitches dissolve.
- Spitting sutures: Occasionally an area of redness and tenderness develops where a dissolving stitch becomes irritated and is pushed to the surface. If this occurs, it is not an emergency. You may clip the stitch or call the clinic for an appointment with the nurse.
- Do not use over-the-counter lotions, solutions or herbal preparations on your incisions unless directed by your doctor.
- You may be provided with an abdominal binder or girdle. There is no evidence that these compression garments help with healing. Therefore, it is for your comfort only. If you choose to wear a binder, make sure your incision is at the midpoint of the binder. Wearing a shirt under the binder may help reduce irritation to your incision. Check your drain tubing to make sure there is no kinks. Wear the binder when doing activity for four to six weeks.

If any of the following symptoms occur, contact your provider right away: (603) 650-5148.

Seromas:

Before or after your drains are removed, you may notice localized swelling. This could be a collection of fluid under the skin or near the incision site.

Signs and Symptoms of Infection:

- Temperature over 100.4° F or 38° C
- Redness of the suture lines that is beginning to spread away from the incision after the first 48 hours
- Increased pain/discomfort that is not relieved by pain medication
- Yellow pus-like or foul smelling drainage larger than dime size from the incisions or drain sites

Contacting Our Office

During office hours:

Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm call (603) 650-5148.

On weekends or after office hours:

Call (603) 650-5000 and ask the operator to page the Plastic Surgery Resident on call.

Prescription line:

Call (603) 653-3905 from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday for prescription refills. Narcotic renewals will not be honored after hours or on weekends. Make your request a few days before you run out, as it may take up to 24 hours for physician approval.

For a listing of providers, events, support groups and health information visit Dartmouth-Hitchcock.org

Manage your health online at myD-H.org

Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center is a charitable organization and has a financial assistance policy.

DHMC is a Smoke-Free and Tobacco-Free campus.



Plastic Surgery
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201309-292

Abdominoplasty and Panniculectomy

Pre-operative and Post-operative Instructions

Name _____
 Provider _____
 Surgery _____

 Date _____



Preparing for Surgery:

The healing process after abdominal surgery varies with each person. Here are some points to keep in mind.

- Stop taking aspirin and ibuprofen two weeks before surgery and for at least two days after surgery. Also, avoid other blood thinning products such as vitamin E, fish oil, Ginkgo biloba, St. John's wort and garlic supplements.
- To be safe, take only acetaminophen (Tylenol®) for pain in the two weeks before surgery.
- Stop using tobacco and avoid being around anyone who smokes for at least one month before and two weeks after surgery. Smoking can impair wound healing and lead to infection. Due to a strong risk for delayed healing, we will perform a urine test on the day of your surgery to test for byproducts of smoking. If the test is positive, your surgery will be cancelled.
- If you are using nicotine patches or gum, you should stop two weeks before surgery and for five days after surgery.
- Shower the night before and the morning of your surgery. Wash with an antibacterial soap.

If you are scheduled for surgery using:

Local anesthetic:

You may eat a normal diet the day of surgery.

General anesthesia (in the main operating room or the Outpatient Surgery Center):

- A representative from Same Day Surgery will call you in the afternoon the business day before your surgery. You will be given the time of surgery. You will also be told when to stop eating and drinking. If you have questions, you may call Same Day Surgery at (603) 650-5300.
- With any surgery, there will be some discomfort or pain. We will prescribe pain medication – usually a narcotic and an anti-inflammatory. You should take it as recommended and only as needed. Read your “Narcotic Use and Post-Op Pain” handout for proper use of pain medications.
- Due to the healing process and the anesthesia, you can expect to feel tired for the first one to three weeks after surgery.
- Rest frequently during the day, and limit visitors until you feel more up to it.

- Altered sensation (such as shooting or burning pain) or numbness is common after surgery. Normal or near-normal sensation should return within a few months, but some areas may stay numb permanently.
- You will not be able to lift more than five pounds for six weeks. There will be further restrictions for several months if you have muscle tightening. Ask your provider about further limitations. If it hurts, don't do it.
- You will not be able to drive for two to three weeks or while taking your pain medication. You may wear your safety belt if you place a small pillow over your abdominal incision.
- You should have no sexual activity for three to six weeks.
- You will be able to return to work in four to six weeks.

Post-Operative Drain & Incision Care:

Your plastic surgery team will closely follow your post-operative care. You will most likely spend one night in the hospital.

Your doctor may place suction drains in your abdomen to remove fluid build-up. If so:

- Your hospital nurse will review drain care with you. You will learn how to measure and record the total amount of fluid from each drain.
- Call the clinic at (603) 650-5148 and schedule an appointment with the nurses to have your drains removed when the drainage is 30 cc or less in a 24-hour period for two days in a row.
- Note: Abdominal swelling above the incision may last for several weeks to months due to tissue fluid build-up.
- You may shower two days after surgery, even if you still have your drains, unless your surgeon advises you differently.
- To reduce the strain on your incision, you should remain in a flexed/recliner chair position for three to five days.