PERIOPERATIVE SERVICES

**Post-Operative Instructions for Abdominoplasty**

HOSPITAL STAY:

Some patients stay overnight and have a urinary catheter in place. If you do stay overnight, you will be discharged early the next morning after your urinary catheter has been removed by the nurse.

PAIN:

Some pain is normal after surgery. Your doctor will prescribe pain pills for you. Take as instructed. For mild to moderate discomfort you may wish to take Acetaminophen (Tylenol™) or Ibuprofen (Advil™). If you have worsening pain not managed by your medication, contact your surgeon for instructions.

OPERATIVE SITE:

Garment

You will be provided with an Abdominal Garment to hold your dressings and provide support after your surgery. Wear it as directed by your surgeon. It should be tight enough to provide support. It should not restrict your breathing.

Drains

* Drains may have been placed in the abdominal area to prevent fluid from collecting under the skin.
* Fluid will range in colour from red to pink then yellow.
* Your nurse will teach you how to empty the drains and record the volume.
* The drains will be removed when daily total volume is less than \_\_\_\_cc for two consecutive days (usually between 5 – 10 days after your surgery).
* Your surgeon may make arrangements for your drain(s) to be removed by a nurse through the Local Health Integration Network Home and Community Care (LHIN HCC).
* After your drains are removed, you may notice pink/yellow fluid leaking from the drain holes or incisions. Contact your surgeon’s office if this does not slow after 2 more days.

Incision

* Remove dressing when instructed by your surgeon. Keep them dry and covered until that time.
* You may change the outer gauze if it gets soiled (sanitary napkins are good for this).
* Keep the Steri-strip™ tapes over the incision site intact.
* Replace the garment.
* You may sponge bath at any time but keep the incisions and drain sites dry.

**After the drains are removed and daily thereafter;**

* Remove the outer padding and gauze (yellow or red drainage on the dressing is normal).
* Shower normally, then pat the incision dry. Apply Vaseline™ or prescribed ointment to any scabbed areas.
* If there is drainage cover your incision with gauze or a sanitary napkin. Put your post-op garment back on.
* Your sutures will dissolve on their own.
* Swelling and bruising will peak in 2 – 3 days, reducing significantly over the first 2 weeks. Your skin will be slightly tight during this time.
* Your abdominal skin will settle and soften over 3 months.
* Your incision will fade and soften over the next 18 months.

**ACTIVITY**:

**Do:**

* Get plenty of rest but take your meals at the table, walk to the bathroom etc.
* In the days that follow, go for frequent short walks around the house.
* You may return to work in 2-6 weeks depending on your occupation and type of physical exertion required.

**Do NOT:**

* Stand fully straight until instructed to do so.
* Exercise your abdomen or trunk or go jogging for 6 weeks.
* Swim in lakes, pools or a hot tub for at least 2 weeks, and only after incision has healed.
* Drive until you are pain free and no longer taking narcotic medications and have a licensed adult drive with you for your first few trips.

**DIET:**

You may resume a regular diet. It is advisable to eat a high fiber diet and drink plenty of fluids to help prevent constipation**.** Good sources of fiber are fruits, vegetables and whole grain breads and cereals (All Bran™, Bran Flakes, Shreddies™ and Shredded Wheat). You may also purchase an over the counter stool softener like Colace™ or a mild laxative if needed.

**FOLLOW UP**:

Your doctor will advise you when to follow up in the office.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

* You will start your SkinMedica Scar Recovery Gel™ after your follow up visit.

Contact your surgeon or go to the nearest Emergency Department if you have:

Signs of infection such as:

* Elevated temperature (38ºC or 100.4ºF) and/or chills lasting more than 24 hours
* The incision is hot, swollen and not healing and redness that spreads beyond the incision.
* Pus-like drainage from the incision, grey, yellow or green.
* New pain, getting worse after 3 - 4 days.
* Pain in your calves.
* Pain with breathing and/or shortness of breath.
* Inability to pass gas, uncontrolled nausea and vomiting.

The information contained on this sheet is provided to you and your family to help you in your recovery from this procedure. This document is not intended to replace medical advice from your doctor or healthcare team. If you require more specific/additional medical advice, contact your doctor and healthcare team about your particular healthcare needs.

Protect yourself! Clean your hands frequently using soap and water or

hand sanitizer, and ask that your healthcare providers and visitors do the same." Clean hands save lives.