Abdominoplasty
Care After Surgery

Please read the instructions outlined below and refer to this sheet in the next few weeks. These discharge instructions provide you with general information on caring for yourself after you leave the hospital. Your caregiver may also give you specific instructions. While your treatment has been planned according to the most current medical practices available, unavoidable complications occasionally occur. If you have any problems or questions after discharge, please call your caregiver.

ACTIVITY

- Activity should be limited to “bed to chair” transfers for 24 hours after surgery, and then gradually increased as instructed.
- For the first week: When lying down or sleeping, your head and knees should be elevated (raised). Your head should be elevated on at least two pillows, and your legs elevated on at least one pillow. This will decrease tension on the incision line (where you were cut).
- Do not stand erect (up) for the first 3-7 days. This will also decrease tension on the incision line.
- No driving until your follow-up visit and until you are no longer taking prescription pain medication.
- You may need help with getting in and out of bed and to the bathroom for the first few days.

NUTRITION

You may restart your normal diet if you have no problems doing so.

HYGIENE

- No showers until your follow-up visit.
- You may sponge bathe.
- You may wash your hair with help by bending forward over the sink.

FEVER

If you feel feverish or have shaking chills, take your temperature. If it is 100°F (37.8º C) or above, call your caregiver. The fever may mean there is an infection.

PAIN CONTROL

You may feel some abdominal discomfort. You will be given a prescription for a pain reliever. Please follow your caregiver's directions. If the pain is not relieved by your medicine, becomes worse, or you have difficulty breathing, call your caregiver.

INCISION CARE

- Your incision has staples and/or sutures (stitches). These will be removed in 10-14 days in the caregiver's office.
- Do not put any lotions or ointments on the incision unless directed to do so by your caregiver.
- Your surgical garment is to be worn continuously for the first 3 weeks. Ask your caregiver if it may be removed for a sponge bath or to check the incision site. After the first week, you may use a firm-fitting high-waist girdle. If the surgical garment becomes very soiled, call your caregiver for instructions.

DRAIN CARE (IF YOU GO HOME WITH A DRAIN)

- Empty and reset your drain at least 2-3 times a day.
- Keep a record of the time and amount of drainage you empty. Bring this record with you to your follow-up appointment.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Unusual or increasing swelling.
- Redness in the flap or abdominal area.
- Drainage that is yellow or green in color, or has a bad odor.
- Large amount of drainage.
- Incision line that looks like it is pulling apart.

Document Released: 07/22/2005 Document Re-Released: 03/26/2009
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.