



3609 Park East Drive, Suite 206
Beachwood, OH, 44122
(216) 514-8899

What to expect after a Tummy Tuck-Liposuction Procedure

The following information is designed to help you understand what to expect after your tummy tuck. This information supplements the “*Instructions Before Surgery*” and “*General Instructions for Postoperative Patients*” forms.

Typical postoperative course (what to expect):

- **Pain.** Pain is highly variable patient to patient, but generally the first 7-10 days after abdominal surgery you have a fair amount of pain. Most patients use narcotics frequently during this time period, but by the end of the first week, most patients are taking just Tylenol™. You will need to walk bent over for the first few days so as not to stress your incision and put extra pull on your tightly sewn belly muscles.
- **Bruising.** Patients will get bruising, but the amount of bruising is highly variable between patients. Any bruise, surgical or otherwise, will take 2-3 weeks to change color and resolve. As the bruises change color, they may initially become darker before fading.
- **Swelling.** Again, this varies patient to patient, peaking typically two days after surgery. It may take 4-6 weeks for all the swelling to resolve.
- **Garment.** You will need to wear a compression garment for the first 3 weeks for 22 hours a day. This garment helps support your incisions and compresses your tissues to help minimize bruising and decrease swelling. You will wear the garment for 12 hours a day for the following 6 weeks and again 8 hours a day for the next 6 weeks. This makes a total of 15 weeks, wearing the garment at night is okay.
- **End result.** As described above, it will take about 2-3 months for residual swelling to resolve. The last changes are subtle so it takes some time before the actual end result is achieved.
- **Down-time.** Most patients return to work in 1-2 weeks, depending on their job requirements and pain tolerance. Knowing at one week there will still be noticeable swelling and bruising. “Social down-time” refers to the amount of time until a patient’s recent surgery is not detectable to others. Most tummy tuck/lipo patients will go out in public the first week after surgery as the garment is not visible under clothing to co-workers and friends, although the amount of time varies by patient and observer.
- **Drain(s)** Dr. Goldman will place 1-2 drains during the surgery to help minimize your risk of a hematoma or seroma (the build up of fluids) formation. The fluid drained will allow your tissues and muscle to heal faster. You will be asked to care for the drains by stripping the tubing, emptying the drainage and recording the amount of that drainage several times a day. You will be given specific written instructions and a demonstration during your post-op recovery phase. Your drains will be removed depending on the amount of fluid that they are extracting daily. Most drains are removed with minimal discomfort at your first post-op appointment, 5-8 days after your surgery.
- **Numbness.** You should expect some abdominal numbness after surgery. Most, if not all, areas of this numbness will resolve over the period of healing.
- **Exercise.** You will need to take short walks around the house the day of your surgery and everyday thereafter to prevent the risk of blood clots.
- **Stitches.** Dr. Goldman uses absorbable stitches that do not require removal.

Instructions prior to surgery:

- **Start Miralax** 3-4 days prior to surgery to help prevent constipation in the early post-op period.

Instructions and precautions after surgery:

- **Take no aspirin or NSAIDs** (like Motrin or Alleve) for two weeks postoperatively. Also avoid Vitamin E, fish oil, and take no homeopathic remedies unless cleared by our office.
- **No bending, heavy lifting, or straining** for two weeks. Light activity is desirable.
- **Watch for excess swelling, bruising, pain, or bleeding.** Call Dr. Goldman if you are concerned that bleeding, swelling, or pain is excessive. There are no specific criteria, and such changes vary greatly between patients, so use common sense and call if you are worried.
- **Apply antibiotic ointment twice a day** to all the incisions. You may use maxi-pads at the small and large incision sites. This will help catch and drainage from staining your garment.
- **Silicone gel.** Silicone gel ointment has been shown to reduce keloids, a specific type of thick scar. Dr. Goldman suggests that patients use this once a day, starting after the incisions are completely healed (when there is no residual crusting or scabbing, generally about 2 weeks after the surgery). Most patients use this for 3 months. It is available through our office. You will be given a sample of this gel at your second post-op visit.
- **Follow-up visits.** The first visit is typically 5-8 days postoperatively with our surgical nurse to check early healing and possibly remove the drain(s). The second visit will be with Dr. Goldman 2-3 weeks after surgery and will most likely include the removal of your drain(s). Subsequent follow up visits are generally at time points of 2-3 months, 6-9 months, and 12-18 months after surgery to follow healing and for photographs.
- **Prescriptions.** You will be given a pain prescription and antibiotic prescription the day of surgery. Your significant other that accompanies you may want to pick them up while you are in surgery. They may also want to pick up MiraLAX and Bacitracin ointment while they are at the pharmacy. You will be instructed on their use after your surgery.
- Please also review our *General Instruction for Postoperative Patients* instruction sheet.

**If you have any questions before or after surgery please contact our office at
216-514-8899**