



ABDOMINOPLASTY (TUMMY TUCK) PROCEDURE: PRE AND POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS.

The mission of Dr. De La Cruz and his qualified staff is helping you achieve the best results and making your surgical experience as easy, safe and comfortable as possible. We will not take any undue risks with your health. Begin by reading all of the information you have received. It is your responsibility to follow these instructions. Please, read it thoroughly and if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact Dr. De La Cruz office at the following number: 832- 520-1844.

Two weeks before tummy-tuck surgery:

1. Avoid taking drugs containing aspirin, ibuprofen, blood thinning medication, anti-inflammatory drugs and any herbal supplements that are associated with an increased risk of bleeding during surgery.
2. Confirm your pre-operative history and physical examination appointment with your family doctor/internist. Your pre-operative exam includes the following laboratory tests: Complete Blood Count (CBC), Complete Metabolic Panel (CMP), Pregnancy Test (for women), Electrocardiogram (for patients older than 45 years), and Chest X-rays (when indicated). Tests must be done on an empty stomach in the morning. After having the results, patients should schedule a consultation with the doctor. Depending on your lab tests outcome, Dr. De La Cruz will determine whether the procedure can be performed.
3. If you develop a cold, infection or any other illness prior surgery, please notify the staff at Dr. De La Cruz's office as soon as possible because your surgery may need to be postponed for safety reasons.
4. Vitamins are important in boosting your body's ability to heal. Begin taking multi-vitamins with vitamin C, and minerals such as zinc, calcium, magnesium and iron.
5. Stop smoking and limit your alcohol intake. Do not resume smoking for at least two weeks after your surgery in order to avoid the increased risks of complications associated with nicotine. The nicotine in the cigarette smoke can causes the blood vessels necessary for proper healing to shrink which can lead to healing problems of the lower abdominal skin, infection and/or possible thickening of the abdominal scar. Moreover, the consumption of alcohol prior to surgery can lead to an increased risk of bleeding during your surgery, and alcohol can also interfere with your post-operative medications and should therefore be avoided as long as you are taking prescription medications.
6. Be sure to arrange for a responsible adult to drive you home after surgery and to stay with you for at least the first night following surgery.

Two days before tummy-tuck surgery:

1. At the grocery store: buy light foods such as juice, tea, Gatorade, bread/bagels, jelly, soup, and JELL-O®
2. Buy Hibiclens Antiseptic/Antimicrobial Cleanser (4% Chlorhexidine gluconate solution) or any other equivalent antibacterial cleanser (such as Betadine™ Scrub liquid soap).
3. All prescriptions should be filled prior to your surgical date and bring them with you on the day of your surgery.

4. Prepare bed: you will need several pillows and cushions to help keep your waist flexed/bent. If you have a recliner, you may wish to sleep there instead. Sleeping upright with at least 45 degrees head over the bed after surgery is extremely important.
5. Take only clear liquids one day prior surgery.
6. May start taking Arnica pills: three tablets beneath the tongue, three times daily.

Evening before tummy-tuck surgery:

1. Shower with antibacterial soap (i.e Hibiclens liquid soap) for three full minutes.
2. Take liquids only.
3. Get a good night's rest.
4. Do not eat or drink anything after midnight (12:00am), the night prior to surgery.

The day of the tummy-tuck procedure:

1. Do not eat or drink anything prior to tummy-tuck surgery. Do not smoke or consume alcohol.
2. Shower with Hibiclens antibacterial soap for three full minutes on the day of the surgery, before you go to the surgery center/hospital. Do not put on any makeup, lotion, perfumes or deodorant after washing. Furthermore, do not use hair spray, gel or mousse. Avoid getting Hibiclens solution in contact with your eyes, ears and mouth.
3. Do not wear contact lenses, wigs, hairpins, hairpieces, or jewelry. Dress in loose-fitting, comfortable clothes. Do not wear pullover tops or panty hose.
4. Have a responsible adult drive you to the surgical facility and take you home after surgery. This person should be available to stay with you for at least the first night following surgery. Under no circumstance will you be permitted to go home alone or stay home without another adult present. Please, follow Dr. De La Cruz's recommendation in relation to this decision.

At home after tummy-tuck surgery:

1. It is important for your recovery to get plenty of rest after abdominoplasty. Place pillows beneath your knees and behind your back, to decrease tension on your incision. Keep your waist bend. You need to sleep with the head elevated and torso inclined over 45 degrees (Head over bed >45 degrees) as if you were sleeping on a recliner. While in bed, you are encouraged to move your feet to increase the circulation in your legs.
2. Start walking as soon as possible, as this helps to reduce swelling and lowers the chance of blood clots. Walk as much as you can around the house with assistance from an adult.
3. Wear compression leg stockings (above the knee) daily for up to 4 weeks to reduce your risk of deep venous thrombosis.
4. A small amount of bloody drainage through the bandage is normal. Protect your bed sheets from bloody drainage.
5. After surgery, you will be wearing a specialized compression garment around the clock (except for showering) for approximately 6 months. Wearing the compression garment as directed reduces the likelihood of loose or sagging skin after abdominoplasty. Compression garments should be snug but not uncomfortably tight. If they feel too tight you may loosen them periodically.
6. Please, empty the drains, three times a day, and keep track of how much fluid comes out.
7. After the tummy tuck, you may not shower until your surgical drains are removed at Dr. De La Cruz's office. Generally, surgical drains are removed between 4-7 days after surgery, when the drainage output is less than 30 ml/24 hrs. Until that time you may sponge bathe only.
8. A liquid diet is best for the day of the surgery. Begin by taking liquids slowly and progress to soups or JELL-O®. You can start a regular diet the next day. It is a good idea to begin taking a stool softener beginning the day after surgery. Avoid salt intake as it will keep you swollen.
9. For the first 48 hours, keep your movements to a quiet level. No lifting greater than 5 lbs. for 6 weeks. When walking or standing, keep in a bent position. Afterwards, you may start increasing your movements and straighten up gradually, but there should be no strenuous activity for three weeks after your tummy tuck surgery.
10. Any discomfort should be relieved by the pain medication. Take extra strength Tylenol™ or Advil™ regularly to help with general discomfort.
11. Continue taking your vitamins. You may take iron supplements if you feel fatigued.

12. Do not drive until you are no longer taking any pain medications and you have full range of motion with your arms. You may drive one week after your tummy tuck procedure provided you are comfortable enough to stop in an emergency situation.
13. You may resume exercise in four to six weeks. Consult with Dr. De La Cruz first before starting to work out. It is important to exercise and diet after your procedure to have a long-lasting results. Without proper diet and exercise, you may gain weight after surgery and may lose the wonderful results of your cosmetic surgery.
14. Decreased activity may promote constipation, so you may want to add more raw fruit to your diet, and be sure to increase fluid intake.
15. Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medications.
16. Do not smoke, as smoking delays healing and increases the risk of complications.
17. Resume sexual activity as comfort permits, usually 2-3 weeks post-operatively.
18. Avoid exposing scars to sun for at least 12 months. If sun exposure is unavoidable, make sure to use a high protection sunblock (SPF 30 or greater).
19. Your incision site will be covered with a dressing to keep the area protected. Keep these incisions clean and inspect daily for signs of infection. Some of the common symptoms of surgical site infection are: redness and pain around the area treated, drainage of cloudy fluid from the surgical wound, and fever (above 100.4 F).
20. No tub soaking while sutures or drains are in place. It's typically recommended to avoid swimming or being in a bath tub when you have wounds that are still open since these wounds can get infected caused by Vibrio bacteria.
21. Resume work and regular activities, two weeks after abdominoplasty. You may be instructed to expect a longer recovery time before you return to a physically demanding job.
22. Contact Dr. De La Cruz's office promptly if you notice an increase in swelling, pain, redness, drainage, or bleeding in the surgical area, or if you develop fever (above 100.4 F), dizziness, nausea, or vomiting.