



**Neil J. Zimmel, MD**

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## **Patient Instructions for Abdominoplasty**

### **Preparations for Surgery:**

For two weeks before surgery **AVOID** aspirin or products containing aspirin. Also avoid ibuprofen, naproxen, Vitamin E, and herbal supplements as these products make the blood more difficult to clot. Dr. Zimmel will provide you with a complete list of medications to avoid. You may, however, take Tylenol.

If you smoke Dr. Zimmel urges you to quit as ***least six weeks prior to surgery.***

Dr. Zimmel will place you in an abdominal compression garment after surgery. You should wear this garment for 23 hours per day for approximately three weeks after surgery. This reduced swelling and allows the skin to adhere to its new position. Your overall results will be enhanced by wearing the garment.

Dr. Zimmel will prescribe antibiotics, pain medication, and nausea medication for you during your final preoperative visit. We recommend filling these prescriptions before the day of surgery for your comfort and convenience.

### **Immediately Following Surgery:**

After surgery you will rest quietly for the first 48 hours. You will be able to walk around the house and perform light daily activities. Many patients are unable to stand straight up for a few days to a week after surgery. This is due to the abdominal wall being pulled tight. This usually resolves quickly; however, during this time, it is not at all unusual for you to feel some pain and soreness in the treated area. This will gradually subside and Dr. Zimmel will give you pain medication to relieve it. You must take the entire prescription of antibiotics.

**Dr. Zimmel encourages walking immediately after surgery.** This activity will greatly minimize the risk of deep clots in your leg veins.

You will have two or three small incisions in your groin area from which small drain tubes are placed. These drains collect fluid under the skin normally produced after the procedure. The drains will remain for approximately five days and Dr. Zimmel will remove them in the office during your follow up visits.

You will be required to lay and sleep in a “beach chair” position with the head elevated, waist bent, legs elevated and knees bent. This will relieve pressure from your abdominal

wall and make you feel better. You will sleep in the position for approximately seven days.

***Dr. Zimmel will encourage you to drink 1 to 2 liters of fluid the night of surgery. Dr. Zimmel recommends Gatorade. This will keep you well hydrated, and you should pass urine two or more times during the night.***

***Compression of the abdominal area is essential to ensure an excellent result.*** It helps reduce the amount of swelling and bruising. It also allows the skin to adhere to its new position maximizing your body contouring procedure.

You will have a dressing on your lower abdominal incision and belly button immediately after surgery. You will remove these bandages 48 hours after surgery and leave the incisions open to air. You will have small tape strips covering the abdominoplasty incision, which will remain in place for five to seven days. These tape strips will peel off on their own. You may then shower and gently allow the soap and water to run over the incisions. You may use any normal over-the-counter anti-bacterial soap (Dove, Dial, etc.)

Do not submerge yourself in a bath, swimming pool, or whirlpool for two weeks until your incisions are completely healed.

A few patients react to the anesthetic after surgery with nausea and vomiting. This usually lasts less than 24 hours and should be treated with lots of fluids. Dr. Zimmel will prescribe nausea medicine for during your preoperative visit.

You should plan to be off work for up to five to seven days, although this can vary from person to person.

### **Additional Post-Operative Instructions:**

No heavy exercise or lifting for a minimum of four weeks following surgery. Dr. Zimmel will then allow you to begin cardio exercises at four weeks and weight lifting at six weeks. This will allow the skin to adhere to its new position.

Please call Dr. Zimmel immediately if you experience any of the following after surgery:

- Fever above 100.5°F
- Redness around the incisions
- Shortness of breath, chest pain, or dizziness
- Severe nausea or vomiting

**Remember:** You will experience a rapid improvement in swelling during the first few weeks, but it takes several months for ***all*** of the swelling to go completely away. You will see gradual improvement in the final results for three to four months after surgery.

If you need help or have any questions, feel free to call Dr Zimmel at (804) 423-2100 with your concerns. Dr. Zimmel is on call 24 hours per day, seven days per week and has an answering service to forward calls.

**The quality of your cosmetic enhancement may be compromised if you fail to return for any scheduled post-op visits, or follow the pre and post-operative instructions.**

**Don't hesitate to report any unusual or concerning changes to Dr. Zimmel.**