

# Panniculectomy or Abdominoplasty

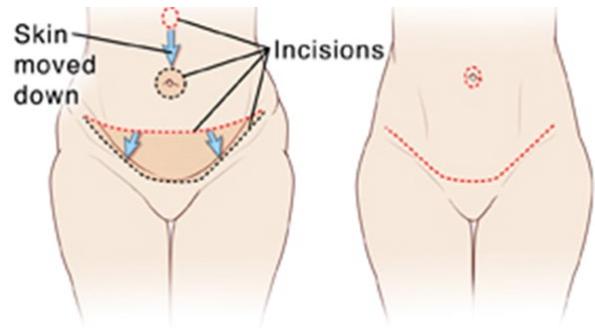
## What to expect and how to prepare

*This handout explains what to expect, how to prepare, and how to plan for your recovery after panniculectomy or abdominoplasty surgery.*

## About Your Surgery

A *panniculectomy* is surgery to remove extra skin and fat that hangs down from the abdomen.

An *abdominoplasty* (“tummy tuck”) is surgery to remove extra skin and fat from the abdomen. The skin is lifted and re-draped, and extra skin at the bottom of the abdomen is removed. Inside the abdomen, the muscles of the abdominal wall are tightened.



*Your surgeon will make incisions across your abdomen to remove extra tissue.*

## How to Prepare

- In some circumstances, you may need to spend the night in the hospital. If this is the case, your provider will discuss this with you.

## Recovery After Surgery

### Post-Surgical Garment

- Wear the compression garment you were provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for 6 weeks. Only take the garment off to wash it or to do daily hygiene.
- You may wear the compression garment over a thin shirt or tank top to keep it from rubbing on your skin.

### Incision Care

- Remove the outermost bandage 48 hours after surgery, before you shower for the first time. Generally, this dressing is gauze and tape.
- If your incision has strips of white tape (Steri-Strips) over it, leave it there until they fall off. If they do not fall off, we will remove them during your first follow-up appointment.
- Some drainage from your incisions is normal. If you have any drainage from your incisions, you may cover the area with dry gauze or a panty liner. Otherwise, leave it uncovered.



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of this handout.

## Hygiene

- Please take a shower 48 hours after surgery. We recommend daily showers to reduce the risk of infection.
- Use mild soap and wash your incisions very gently.
- Do not take a bath, sit in a hot tub, or go swimming until your incisions are fully healed and no scabs remain. This may take 4 to 6 weeks.

## Drains

- You will have 2 or 3 drains in your abdomen. We will teach you how to care for them. Please read the handout “Caring for your JP Drains.”

## Activities and Return to Work

### For 6 weeks:

- Do not lift, push, or pull anything that weighs more than 8 pounds (about the weight of a gallon of water). This includes children and pets.
- Avoid *aerobic exercise* (activities that cause heavy breathing or sustained elevated heart rate).
- Walking is encouraged and helpful for healing and rebuilding strength. Start with 3 to 4 walks a day for 5 to 10 minutes each. Gradually increase your distance and length of time as you heal.
- Return to work varies from person to person and depends on the type of work you do. Please discuss with your surgeon what may be best for you.

## Sleep Position

- Sleep on your back for 4 weeks after surgery, with your head slightly raised; for example, a “beach chair” position.
  - It may be helpful to stack pillows, use a wedge pillow, or sleep in a recliner to keep your head raised.
- Please do not sleep on your stomach until you are cleared by your provider.

## Pain Control

- Please read the handout “Pain Control After Reconstructive Surgery” to learn more.
- Please do not use ice or heat directly on your surgical sites.

## Wound vac

- In certain situations, your surgeon may decide to place you in a dressing called a *wound vac*. This is a suction device that promotes healing by holding the incision edges together and drawing fluid out of the wound.
- We will remove the wound vac in clinic after 5 to 7 days. The therapy unit will turn off automatically at 7 days. Please ensure you are charging the machine while in plac; for example, while sleeping. Do not get this dressing wet. If your therapy unit alarms, please contact the supplier at 800.275.4524.

## When to Contact the Clinic

Check your incisions every day. Contact our clinic or your doctor if you have:

- Bleeding or drainage that soaks your dressing (hold pressure on the site to lessen bleeding)
- A fever higher than 100.5°F (38°C)
- Shaking and/or chills
- Any signs of infection at your surgical site:
  - Redness
  - Increased swelling
  - Bad-smelling drainage
  - Pus or cloudy-colored drainage (white, yellow, or green in color)
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- New rash
- Pain that is worsening and not improved with your pain medicine

### Questions?

Your questions are important. Contact your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

#### **During Clinic Hours (Monday through Friday except holidays, 8am to 5pm):**

If you have any questions or concerns, message your surgeon through MyChart. Please include a photo if it will help explain your concern.

You may also call the Center for Reconstructive Surgery at 206.598.1217, option 2.

#### **Urgent Needs Outside of Clinic Hours:**

If you have an urgent care need after hours, on weekends, or on holidays, please call 206.598.6190 and ask to speak to the plastic surgeon on call.