



# FLORIDA PLASTIC SURGERY

## Detailed liposuction instructions

### Recovery

The day of the operation: The numbing medicine will continue to work throughout your procedure and until you get home but it will begin to wear off within a couple hours. Use your prescription pain medicine to manage the discomfort. Most patients report that the first night and the first morning are the hardest but that after that you will begin to make progress. It is common to feel a little light headed or nauseated if you stand up too fast or overexert yourself, so plan on relaxing and taking it easy the day of your procedure. When you stand up from lying, go slow, sit on the edge of the bed before you fully stand. Regularly eating small meals throughout the day and actively trying to hydrate will help you stay feeling well. One way of telling if you are adequately hydrated is by looking at the color of your urine, if your urine is dark yellow then you probably need to hydrate more. No matter how good you feel, do not make plans to leave your house the day of the procedure. Most patients experience some amount of bloody drainage from some of their incisions. This is expected and not dangerous. For most patients the drainage is mild but constant for the first 24 hours. Some patients have reported feeling like a fountain and have been surprised by how much fluid comes out. If you have any concerns please feel free to contact your surgeon. Of note, because the drainage has blood in it, the blood can stain your clothes, furniture or bedding. It is advisable to cover the areas you sit or lay with non permeable drapes such as chuck pads. These can be purchased through a local drugstore or the office if you prefer.

The first 4 days after the operation: This is when patients report the most discomfort compared to the rest of the recovery. Most patients say that there is a big improvement in how they feel after the first 4 days. We recommend planning on staying in and focusing on your recovery. Avoid the temptation to immediately return to work or a busy schedule.

The first 2 weeks: This is when the body swells the most. After the first 4 days, you will notice that the pain or discomfort will improve almost daily. But you will also notice that the treated area is getting somewhat larger from swelling. Often the skin feels tight and the fat feels hard as this progresses. This is normal but we would like to



## FLORIDA PLASTIC SURGERY

minimize it as much as possible. You will minimize the swelling by 1. continuously wearing the provided compression garment and 2. minimizing strenuous physical activity. As your body swells the fluid may be pushed to other parts of the body that were not treated. This will go away on its own. If the swelling is significant the area may feel quite hard and tender. If you think that your swelling is too severe, uneven or you develop significant bruising please alert your surgeon. You may also notice that as the pain dissipates the treatment area feels slightly numb or itchy. This will resolve as your body heals.

Weeks 2-4: This is when your body starts making big improvements in the reduction of the swelling. Patient's begin to feel like they are making progress in returning to feeling normal over all. It is important that you still avoid strenuous physical activity during this time and that you continue to wear your compression garments as the area is still quite fragile and prone to a swelling "flare up." You may massage the treated areas to help smooth the swelling and comfort the skin. Any hard areas should also begin to soften during this time.

Weeks 4-6: This is when the treated area finally seems to be getting back to normal. In most cases, almost all of the swelling will have resolved by 6 weeks and the tissue has largely healed. Check with your surgeon on when it is okay to return to strenuous physical activity as for most patients it is during this time period. Most patients will still benefit from wearing their compression during this time. You may still have some odd sensations in the treated areas but it should be mostly resolved and continually improving. There may still be some hard areas to the touch but they should be small and not visible.

After 6 weeks: There will likely continue to be improvements in the swelling but it will go away on its own with little effort of thought from you. You may stop using the compression garments. Check with your surgeon but in most circumstances you may return to full, normal activity. In most cases you will see your final results within 2-3 months after the procedure.

### **Medications**



## FLORIDA PLASTIC SURGERY

Please refer to the label on the medication for instructions on how to take it. If you have any questions, call your surgeon or pharmacy for clarification.

Most patients will receive 2 medications following their procedure.

1. An antibiotic (Cephalexin, TMP/SXM, Ciprofloxacin or Clindamycin). This medication is taken at regular intervals until it is all gone.
2. A pain pill (Oxycodone, Ultram, Ibuprofen or Tylenol). As some of these medications may be narcotics, they have the potential to become addictive. We recommend using the medication as you need it but discontinuing it and discarding it once you feel like your pain has dissipated. Many patients transition to Ibuprofen after the first 4-7 days.

Make sure to discuss with your surgeon any prescription medications that you normally take. In most cases it is advisable to continue these medications immediately following your operation. But there may be side effects or interactions that are important to manage.

It is usually ok to resume all herbal medications 1 week following the procedure

Do not take Aspirin containing products for 2 weeks following the procedure without first discussing this with your surgeon.

Supplements with blood thinning properties

Aloe, Cranberry, Feverfew, Garlic, Ginger, Ginkgo, Meadowsweet, Turmeric, Whitewillow, Chamomile, Red clover, Evening primrose, Ginseng, Flaxseed, Saw Palmetto,

### **Activity**

While it is important to limit strenuous physical activity, it is also important that you are not overly sedentary. It is recommended that you take frequent short walks 2-5 minutes every hour or so to increase the circulation in your legs and keep your body limber. As a general rule, it is important that joints around the treated area continue to bend. There is a phenomenon in orthopedics known as a “frozen joint” that occurs



## FLORIDA PLASTIC SURGERY

because a joint doesn't bend for a long period of time. You may begin light stretching and slowly moving the joints immediately after the procedure but do not overly extend or flex them.

It is also important to consider how movements, stretches and posture are affecting the skin of the treatment area. While the area is healing the skin is reattaching to the underlying tissue. It is important that the skin lays flat and smooth over the treatment area and that it is not shifted or sheared while it is healing. Abdomens are particularly prone to issue with the skin laying flat and smooth as they naturally want to fold and wrinkle when you sit or bend over. REgardless of the treatment area, please be conscientious of this and contact your surgeon if you have any concerns.

For most patients, we ask that you refrain from strenuous physical activity for 6 weeks after your procedure. "Strenuous activity" is any activity which resembles working out. Increases in blood pressure or heart rate will transmit through the treatment area and result in increased swelling and discomfort. Even a long day at work or an afternoon spent entertaining family and friends can result in increased swelling.

### **Sexual activity**

Liposuction will not affect your sexual organs but the activity level will create swelling within the treated areas. As a general rule, I tell patients to completely refrain from sexual activity for the first 2 weeks. Then when they resume I encourage them to think of sex like any other physical activity. If what you're doing resembles a "workout" then you need to wait 6 weeks when the tissue is healed and the swelling has resolved.

\*A note to men who have their abdomen or flanks treated: In some instances the swelling from these areas will be pushed into your pelvis and may cause your scrotum to temporarily swell. This is not dangerous or permanent but is often a cause for alarm. Do not panic, lay down in bed and elevate your scrotum with a folded washcloth. The elevation will help the swelling to resolve but it usually takes a few days for resolution. Call your surgeon for reassurance, you won't be the first guy (or the last) this has happened to.



## FLORIDA PLASTIC SURGERY

### **Driving**

You can resume driving when you are off of the narcotics and you feel you can safely respond to an emergency situation in the car, should it occur.

### **Massages**

It has been Dr. Hamwi's experience that post-operative lymphatic drainage massages are beneficial in speeding recovery, minimizing swelling and helping patients achieve the best possible results. Most patients who choose to have lymphatic massages begin 1-2 weeks after the procedure when the tenderness begins to abate. Even if you do not choose to have a professional massage you can perform your own massage. This is particularly important if you develop significant swelling or hard spots as massage will help this resolve. We do not promote one particular massage company or provider, if you choose to have professional lymphatic massage you can search for them locally using the search terms "post liposuction lymphatic drainage massage near me"

### **A note about swelling**

With liposuction we focus a lot of attention on the swelling that occurs after your procedure. Swelling occurs as a normal response to trauma but it is advisable to minimize the swelling as much as possible to reduce discomfort and achieve the best possible results. This is because swelling can be unpredictable and potentially uneven and in surgery we always like to be "in control." Significant swelling can also slow the healing process and the development of your final results. If you have significant swelling or concerns about the appearance of your swelling please contact your surgeon to discuss possible interventions.

### **Bruising**



## FLORIDA PLASTIC SURGERY

Bruising is rare and if present is usually minimal. That being said, significant bruising is possible. While this is rarely, if ever, a problem it is important to make your surgeon aware of significant bruising that occurs or if there is an uneven bulge underneath a bruise. Most bruises tend to resolve on their own in 5-7 days. Areas that bruise tend to cause more swelling in the treated area and the surrounding area. Arnica and Bromelain are supplements that may speed resolution of bruises and reduce inflammation. This can be purchased at a drugstore or through our office if you prefer.

### **Wound management**

For most procedures, on the day of your procedure some of your incisions will be closed with surgical glue and some of the incisions will be left open to drain. The incisions that drain will start to close on their own by the day after the procedure. All of the incisions will form small scabs as they heal. The scabs will fall off in 2-3 weeks and leave behind small scars. In most cases the scars will feel hard and look slightly red and raised, this will begin to resolve in 2-6 months. In order to promote healing and minimize the appearance of the scars you will want to protect the incisions as they heal and continue to care for them once they have progressed to a scar. To protect the incisions you will want to minimize the amount of friction they are exposed to or cover them with a small amount of bacitracin. Avoid using neosporin or triple antibiotic ointment as prolonged exposure can cause a rash and increased irritation. Once the scabs have fallen off you may apply a scar cream or silicone sheeting if you desire.

Use sunscreen and cover your incisions to minimize sun and ultraviolet exposure for the first 6 months to a year to minimize the chances of the scars darkening.

If you think you are developing a keloid scar which grows outside the borders of the initial incisions, alert your surgeon as you may benefit from an intervention.

### **Dressings**

Immediately after the procedure you will be wrapped in an absorbent dressing. This will catch some of the drainage that develops. These dressings can be removed and replaced if they become saturated but make sure that you do not remove your



## FLORIDA PLASTIC SURGERY

underlying compression garment. The drainage almost always stops by the first day after the procedure at which time you will not need other absorbent dressings. Certain treatment areas use additional garmenting such as foam padding or an abdominal board. If you are given foam padding it is usually advised to wear continuously for the first ten days after the procedure. Use of the abdominal board is very patient dependent. If the skin has good elasticity then the board may only be worn for 2 weeks whereas if the skin elasticity is poor it may be advisable to wear the board for 6 weeks. Please check with your surgeon for the exact length of use for your particular case.

### **Garments**

Compression garments can be an important tool to minimize swelling and direct the skin to reattach in a desirable manner. It is important that the compression garment is not removed the first day of the procedure. If you are given a garment that fastens between your crotch it is very important that you reattach this fastener if you go to the restroom. Initially, it may be necessary to get some assistance in taking your garments on and off. It is advisable to plan for this before your procedure.

In most situations it is advisable to wear the compression garment continuously for 4-6 weeks following your procedure. It is ok to remove them to shower and wash the garments.

If you are interested in purchasing a garment other than the one provided by the office please check this with your surgeon.

If your garment is not fitting you correctly and is digging in, creating creases in your skin or chafing the skin please alert your surgeon.

Bunched up and creased garments can cause folds, creases, dents and irregularities. We ask you to be particularly aware of creases or folds in your skin as it can heal this way. It is important that the garment lays flat against your skin and it may need to be manipulated regularly to maintain proper position. If you do develop a skin crease you should adjust the garment and massage the area to smooth the swelling and resolve the crease.

### **Bathing**



## FLORIDA PLASTIC SURGERY

You may shower the day after your procedure or once the incisions have stopped draining. When showering let the water rinse over the incisions and gently pat them with soap. Vigorously scrubbing the incisions may make them scar poorly.

To reduce the risk of an infection, do not submerge the incisions in a bath, pool or other body of water until the scabs have fallen off.

### **Diet**

There are a variety of opinions regarding the best recovery diet. No particular one is supported unanimously or has significant scientific backing. 3 theories that I recommend are avoiding high sodium foods, eating an anti inflammatory diet and reducing your caloric intake. Because You have been asked to reduce your activity level it is advisable to also reduce your caloric intake or you will gain weight and be feeding all of those fat cells that were left behind. It is important to note that while your body is healing it will need adequate protein and calories to recover so don't crash diet.

### **Weight loss and weight gain after procedure**

After performing liposuction the fat store in the area that was treated will have been reduced. This does not change your metabolism (your body's propensity to gain or lose weight). You will still gain or lose weight as you would before the procedure but you may notice that where that weight goes or comes from has changed. As a general rule, after most of the swelling has resolved, six weeks after your procedure, your body weight should equal your weight on the day of the procedure minus the weight of the fat removed. If you weigh less than this you have lost weight during the healing process, if you weigh more than this you have gained weight during the healing process.

### **Sleeping**

As a general rule it is best to sleep flat on your back. This may not be something you can control but is something that you should keep in mind. When you are on your





## FLORIDA PLASTIC SURGERY

back your body is symmetric and swelling will tend to be symmetric. If you are on your side then your body tends to stretch on the bottom side and bend on the top side. Gravity will also tend to shift the swelling unevenly. Do your best to manage this but remember that thousands of people have liposuction and in my experience sleeping position is rarely a major issue.

### **When to call the doctor**

- A metallic taste in your mouth or ringing in your ears on the day of the procedure
- Fever above 101 degrees
- Severe pain uncontrolled by pain medications
- Rash, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea after taking your medications.
- Increasing redness or sensitivity in any area.
- Foul-smelling or cloudy drainage from the wounds
- Sudden onset of chest pain, difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Loss of consciousness or changes in behavior
- Pain and or swelling in one or both of your lower legs
- Anything that look or feels unexpected, "it's always better to be safe than sorry"

**IF YOUR SYMPTOMS ARE SEVERE OR YOU CANNOT REACH A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY**

### **URGENT ISSUES**

**DURING BUSINESS HOURS (9AM-5PM): 941.800.2000**

**AFTER HOURS call your doctor (Kristopher Hamwi, MD): 813.530.5000**

Optional supplies:

- Antibacterial soap
- Waterproof sheet for bed
- Absorbent pads "chuck pads"
- Paper tape
- Arnica/Bromelain
- Scar cream
- Silicone sheeting