

**Brent Moelleken, MD, FACS**  
**Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery**

Board Certified, American Board of Plastic Surgery  
Associate Clinical Professor, Plastic Surgery UCLA

**ABDOMINOPLASTY AFTER-CARE INSTRUCTIONS**

**INTRO:**

Congratulations on your decision to get abdominoplasty (a.k.a. tummy tuck or Hybrid Tummy Tuck®). These after-care instructions, along with our office staff, will help guide you through your recovery process. It is crucial that you and your caretakers **read through these instructions both *BEFORE AND AFTER SURGERY***.

**AFTERCARE:**

- Following surgery, it is Mandatory to stay at an Aftercare Facility or have a nurse stay with you for the first 24 hours. The office of Dr. Brent Moelleken can make arrangements for you.

**WALKING:**

- It is imperative to get out of bed regularly, and often (with assistance) following surgery to prevent postoperative problems such as blood clots. Light walks around your home or aftercare facility is the goal. This will help reduce the risk of blood clots developing by encouraging blood flow throughout your legs.
- The first week you will need to walk slightly bent over at the hips to reduce pressure on incision, and tightened abdominal muscles. You will be able to stand more vertical each day.
- If you are sitting or lying down, move your ankles up and down and in a circular motion a couple times each hour to help increase blood flow.
- If you have shortness of breath, leg swelling, and/or leg pain at any point in your postoperative healing, seek immediate help by calling Dr. Brent or call 911. This could possibly be a blood clot.

**COMPRESSION GARMENTS:**

- You will be provided with a compression garment that you will wear 24/7 for 2 weeks.
- It is helpful to purchase an additional garment to wear while washing the soiled garment.
- Additional garments can be purchased at any medical supply store or a department store, or [www.elitebrandind.com](http://www.elitebrandind.com). Please make sure that your garment will cover the entire abdominal area down to your knees.
- You should wear the SPANX for at least 12hrs a day for next 2 weeks.

**SHOWERING:**

- You can shower 3 days after surgery (no baths). It is best to take the compression garment off, wait 5 minutes and then shower to reduce the risk of falling because of the change in blood pressure.
- Keep your back to the showerhead to help protect sutures from direct water pressure for the first few showers.
- After showering, carefully pat dry or air dry your body.
- Apply new dressings (sterile surgical pads) on incisions and put back on compression garments.
- Make sure an adult is with you for your first shower.

### **PAIN AND PAIN MEDICATION:**

- Take pain medication with food.
- All pain medication should be taken as directed by Dr. Brent or RN.
- If your pain is mild, you may opt to take Tylenol Extra Strength.
- Take a stool softener, such as Colace, while taking pain medication to help prevent constipation.
- DO NOT DRIVE WHILE TAKING PAIN MEDICATIONS.
- DO NOT DRINK ALCOHOL WHILE TAKING PAIN MEDICATIONS.
- Take pain medications only if needed. The quicker you can wean off the pain medications, the better you will feel and heal.

### **SUPPLEMENTS:**

- Do not take aspirin (Ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin) for 10 days before or after surgery
- Do not take herbal supplements (vitamin E, fish oil, hormone replacements) for 10 days before and after surgery.
- Phentermine or appetite suppressants should not be taken until 6 weeks after surgery since they increase heart rate and blood pressure which could interfere with your recovery.
- Some Hormone Replacements may need to be stopped as directed by Dr. Brent.

### **DO NOT SMOKE:**

- This is very important because smoking (tobacco, marijuana, or vapes) can result in a lack of blood supply to the tissues and fat, causing the tissue to die or delayed healing.
- Smoking can resume 4 weeks after surgery as long as there are no other complications present.

### **DRAINS**

- If drains were placed, please keep the drain sheet provided by Dr. Brent and record the amount of drainage over a 24-hour period.
- Depending on how much drainage you have, you can empty the drains 3 times a day (every 8 hours) or twice a day (every 12 hours).
- It is normal for the drain sites to “leak” fluid at first, and you can put sterile surgical pads to collect extra fluid. It is normal to see “clots” of blood in the drains.
- It is normal to have one drain site to sting or be sore than the other one.
- You will see more drainage if you overdo activities.
- The drains can be removed when the drainage is 25 cc or less in 24 hours (usually occurs in 7 -14 days).

### **POSITIONING/SLEEPING:**

- It is common for your hands and feet to swell the first couple weeks after surgery. To reduce swelling, it helps to elevate your arms and legs with pillows when you are lying or sitting.
- A recliner chair will give you the best position with your legs up and your back slightly reclined. If you don't have a recliner chair, you can replicate this position in a bed with pillows under your legs, and 2-3 pillows behind your back.
- You will need to sleep on your back, with your head being raised to at least a 30° angle, and knees slightly bent for 3 weeks.
- You can sleep flat on your back 3 weeks after surgery, and on your side 6 weeks after surgery.

**DIET:**

- A light diet is best after surgery. Start with liquids and progress to soft foods like soups and Jell-O.
- Stay on a soft diet with high protein for 2-3 days following surgery. Avoid spicy foods, sugar-free sweeteners and carbonated drinks to reduce gas, bloating and nausea.
- Remaining hydrated (64 oz of water per day) and regular walks will also help to prevent these occurrences.

**ACTIVITIES:**

- Refrain from raising blood pressure for 10 days before and after surgery to prevent bleeding.
  - No hot baths or spas for the first three weeks.
- Cardio exercise, swimming, and inactive sexual activities may resume 4 weeks following surgery or depending on your healing process.
- Do not lift anything over 10 lbs. for 6 weeks (a gallon of milk weighs approximately 8.5 lbs.)
- No abdominal exercises until cleared by Dr. Brent.

**SUTURES/SCAR TREATMENT:**

- The sutures will dissolve over the next 7-12 days and it is important not to tug on the them.
- If they become uncomfortable, you may have them removed at your 2-week follow up appointment.
- At four weeks, you can begin using silicone scar patches on the incision sites recommended by Dr. Brent and are available for sale in the office. The silicone patches will help flatten and soften scars and reduce redness, itching, and pain on incisions.

**EXPECTATIONS:**

- Moderate swelling of your abdomen area is to be anticipated. The swelling will start to diminish at 6 weeks, but can take as long as 6 months to resolve.
- If there was removal of tissue from your abdomen, there will be tightness that will lessen each day.
- Bruising is to be expected and will improve over the next 3-4 weeks.
- It will take 3-6 months to see final results. It is common to see asymmetry, day-to-day swelling changes, creasing along incision line (especially at the edges), and numbness from nerve regrowth until you are fully healed.
- Final Results may take up to 12 months.

**FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS:**

- Every patient heals at a different rate, but you will be seen several times for post-op appointments. Typically, they are scheduled for day one, one week, two-three weeks, six weeks, three months, and six months after surgery.
- The purpose of these appointments is to check your healing progress.
- Please call to schedule your appointments. The Beverly Hills office phone number is (310) 273-1001 and the Santa Barbara office phone number is (805) 898-9299.

**QUESTIONS & CONCERNS:**

- If you have questions or concerns regarding your procedure please email [assistant@drbrent.com](mailto:assistant@drbrent.com) or email Dr. Brent Moelleken at [drbrent@drbrent.com](mailto:drbrent@drbrent.com).
- Please call the office at (310) 273-1001 if you have increased pain at surgical incision sites, redness, sudden swelling, warmth, pus, drainage, or a fever greater than 101.5°F.
- Please visit an emergency room or call 911 if you have shortness of breath or leg swelling with pain to rule out a pulmonary embolism or blood clot which could be deadly if left untreated.

**HELPFUL ITEMS TO PURCHASE BEFORE SURGERY:**

- \_\_\_ Stool Softener (i.e. Colace)
- \_\_\_ Sterile surgical pads (these will help absorb any fluid from incisions)
- \_\_\_ Alcohol wipes (for cleaning drain incision sites)
- \_\_\_ Hydrogen Peroxide
- \_\_\_ Compression garments (you will be sent home with one but will need an extra one while washing the soiled garment. Please purchase one that covers the areas of the incisions. You can buy them at a department store or [www.elitebrandind.com](http://www.elitebrandind.com).)
- \_\_\_ Thermometer (monitor your temperature after surgery and make sure it stays below 101.5°F)

**ADDITIONAL POST-OP NOTES:**

---

---

---

---