

Preparing for Surgery

Our instructions are based on many years of experience and the feedback of our patients. Please help us take care of you by reading them. As always we are available for any questions.

Starting Now:

- ✓ Stop Smoking: Smoking reduces circulation to the skin and impedes healing.
- ✓ Prescriptions you are currently taking: Be sure to tell Dr. Stefanacci about any prescription medications that you are currently taking. He will tell you whether or not you should continue with those medications prior to your surgery. Ask whether or not you should take any of your medications on the morning of surgery.
- ✓ Do not take Aspirin or Ibuprofen: Stop taking medications containing aspirin or ibuprofen. Review the list of drugs containing aspirin and ibuprofen carefully. Such drugs can cause bleeding problems during and after surgery. If necessary, use medications containing acetaminophen instead of aspirin or ibuprofen (such as Tylenol). Discontinue two weeks prior to surgery and for two weeks after surgery.
- ✓ Stop taking Vitamin E: Dr. Stefanacci recommends that you discontinue the use of Vitamin E supplements preoperatively and immediately postoperatively, as it may increase bleeding. Discontinue for two weeks prior and for two weeks after surgery. A multivitamin that has E in it is fine as long as it is less than or equal to 700 IU's.
- ✓ Fill your prescriptions: You will be given prescriptions for medications. Please have them filled as soon as possible well BEFORE your surgery date.

The day before surgery:

- ✓ Confirm admit time: Your admit time will be confirmed by the surgical center, generally patients that are older or have medical illnesses such as diabetes are scheduled first, otherwise we do our best to accommodate our patient's schedule. If there is a need to change your admit time, we will notify you as soon as possible prior to your surgery.
- ✓ Prescriptions: Make sure that you have filled the prescriptions you were given.
- ✓ Cleansing: The night before or morning of surgery, shower and wash your body with Hibiclens soap which you will be given at your pre-operative visit... Avoid

getting the soap in your eyes. After you shower, do not use any cream, lotion, powder or deodorant on your body. You may still use shampoo and conditioner on your hair. This will cut down on the amount of bacteria on your skin.

- ✓ **Eating and drinking: Do not eat or drink anything after 12:00 midnight. This includes drinking water, eating candy and chewing gum.**

Morning of Surgery:

- ✓ **Special information: Do not eat or drink anything unless instructed to do so by Dr. Stefanacci or the Anesthetist! This includes water!** If you take a daily medication prescription or otherwise, please discuss this with Dr. Stefanacci and the Anesthetist prior to your surgery. Dr. Stefanacci will have to cancel your procedure if you have had anything to eat or drink the morning of surgery that was not approved by your Anesthetist.
- ✓ **Contact Lenses:** Please remove contact lenses, or bring lens case and solution to remove before surgery. Also, please remember to bring eyeglasses
- ✓ **Oral Hygiene:** You may brush your teeth but do not swallow any of the water.
- ✓ **Cleansing:** Shower and wash your body with Hibiclens soap.
- ✓ **Make-Up:** Please do not wear moisturizers, creams, lotions, deodorant, make-up, or perfume.
- ✓ **Jewelry:** Please do not wear or bring any jewelry to the surgery center. If you have jewelry you cannot remove, please let the nurse know. Ponytail holders are suggested for long hair, but please do not wear any metal or hard hair clips or pins.
- ✓ **Body Jewelry:** If you have any body jewelry, you must remove it prior to surgery.
- ✓ **Clothing:** When you leave the surgery center you will be sleepy and will want to crawl right into bed when you get home. Wear only comfortable, loose-fitting clothes with a front opening. Do not wear pullovers or turtlenecks, tight slacks or jeans, or high-heeled or high top lace shoes. Slippers or slip-on shoes are preferred... Please remove all jewelry, and leave all jewelry and valuable at home.
- ✓ **At home:** Prepare your bed and atmosphere at home before you leave for surgery. Have several comfortable outfits' ready- pajamas, sweats, nightgowns, etc. Have extra pillows, blankets or quilts available where you will be most comfortable. Books on tape, videos, music and television can help to pass the time until you

feel more able to be up and around. Have plenty of food and beverages available that are easy to prepare and serve. Please consume bland foods such as soup and toast until you feel comfortable that you don't have any nausea after surgery.

The Operating Suite:

- ✓ Going to the operating room is a new experience for most. Dr. Stefanacci and her professional staff recognize the natural anxiety with which most patients approach this step in the process of achieving their goals. We believe a description of the surgery experience will be helpful.
- ✓ Your surgery will be performed here at Renaissance Surgery Center. Specialist using the most modern equipment and techniques will attend to you. The team includes a certified registered nurse anesthetist, a trained operating room technician and a registered nurse in charge of the operating room.
- ✓ Once you enter the operating room, the staff will do everything they can to make you feel comfortable and secure. When you are on the operating table our staff will connect you to the monitoring devices to ensure your safety. Medications will be administered through the IV. These medications will begin to make you sleep.
- ✓ When your surgery has been completed and your dressings are in place, you will be moved to the recovery room. You will be connected to monitoring equipment immediately. During this period, your anesthetist, surgeon, and fully-trained recovery room nurse will take care of you and remain with you at all times.
- ✓ We anticipate that your stay in the recovery room will last from 1-2 hours, depending on how soon you are ready to leave. Most patients are full awake within 45-60 minutes after surgery and usually do not remember much about their stay in the recovery room.

Post Surgery Arrangements:

- ✓ At home or hotel: You must arrange for a competent, caring, capable adult to drive you to and from the surgery center. Your caregiver/ride should be waiting for you in our waiting room. Your caregiver must remain with you all day and through the first night. You may not be left alone during this time.

Medications

Dr. Stefanacci and the nursing staff have given you prescriptions for your comfort and care. It is important that you use the medications as directed unless you experience abnormal symptoms that might be related to medication usage.

We generally provide you with prescriptions for pain medications and antibiotics on your preoperative visit to allow you to be prepared after surgery.

Do not drive while taking pain medications or muscle relaxants

Do not mix medications with alcoholic beverages

Symptoms such as itching, rash development, wheezing, and tightness in the throat would probably be due to an allergy. Should these occur, discontinue all medications and call our office for instructions.

Post Operative Instructions

- ✓ You will be seen on a weekly basis after your abdominoplasty and each patient increases their level of activity based on their own progress after surgery.
- ✓ The day following your surgery you will be seen in the office. Your dressing and urinary catheter will be removed. During the first few days after surgery, most patients will use their prescribed pain medications, slowly weaning themselves off as tolerated. We advise patients to use over-the-counter stool softeners, prune juice and possibly a laxative if necessary to prevent or treat constipation, a common side effect of narcotic pain medication. The post-operative garment is to be worn at all times, unless otherwise instructed by the office. During this first week we recommend moving around the house, to the bathroom, kitchen, etc., and taking deep breaths every 3-4 hours to prevent complications. We recommend only sponge baths during the first post-operative week.
- ✓ At the one-week post-operative visit to the office, one or possible both drains will be removed. The steri-strips covering your abdominal incision will also be removed and you will be able to shower normally. Patients may increase their level of activity slowly, but no exercise and no lifting more than 10 pounds. Patients may report a decrease in energy during this healing phase.
- ✓ During the second week after surgery, we will see you in the office and remove the second drain if it was not removed earlier. You should have less swelling by this time and the compression garment can be removed at night if desired. Your energy level will slowly return and you may resume light activity. We still advise against strenuous activity and heavy lifting.
- ✓ By the 3rd to 4th week after surgery, most patients feel close to normal and have often returned to work. You may wish to continue wearing your garment or some other type of supportive under garment.
- ✓ **Activity/Sports**: We want you to avoid straining or any aerobic activity for at least 3 weeks after surgery. The main objective is to keep your heart rate under 120 beats per minute. This is to avoid bleeding, bruising, and swelling. Do not resume strenuous exercise for 4 to 6 weeks. Dr. Stefanacci will give you clearance to increase your activities according to the progress of your recovery.

- ✓ **Driving:** You may resume driving when you feel you are able, generally in 3-4 days. Keep in mind that you must have full use of your reflexes. If pain will inhibit them, do not drive! Do not drive if you are taking pain medications.
- ✓ **Sexual Activity:** You may enjoy sexual activity as your body allows with the following restriction: please reread Activity/Sports above and apply the same concept to sex.
- ✓ **Sun exposure:** If fresh scars are exposed to sunlight, they will tend to become darker and take longer to fade or possibly even tattoo the skin leaving a permanent scar. Always use sunscreen. Take extra care and precautions if the area operated on is slightly numb- you might not “feel” sunburn developing! If you have any postoperative bruising then you must stay out of the sun until the bruising is completely gone.
- ✓ **Work:** Allow adequate time after surgery to rest, heal and recover from your procedure. Discuss your job duties with Dr. Stefanacci to decide an appropriate time before returning to work.

Recovering From Surgery

Family & Friends:

- ✓ Support from family and friends are very helpful, but because they may not understand what constitutes a normal postoperative course, their comments may unintentionally create emotional turmoil for you. We will tell you honestly how you are doing and what we expect your results to be. Please trust our knowledge and experience when we discuss your progress with you.
- ✓ Although plastic surgery has become quite popular, your friends may still be reluctant to bring up what they believe is a private matter. Patients occasionally feel upset that “no one noticed” or “said anything.” If you feel comfortable discussing your surgical experience, do so openly. When people ask how you are doing, respond by saying, “I feel wonderful, I just had plastic surgery and I’m recovering nicely.” This lets people know that they may talk freely with you. Often when patients are open, they find that their friends and acquaintances are very interested in discussing the subject.
- ✓ **Depression:** Quite frequently, patients experience a brief period of “let-down” or depression after aesthetic surgery. Some may have subconsciously expected to feel and look better “instantly,” although they rationally understand that this will not be the case. Patients commonly question their decision to have surgery during the first few days after surgery. As the healing occurs, these thoughts usually disappear quickly. If you feel depressed, understand that this is a “natural” phase

of the healing process. If necessary, please let us help you through this period.

- ✓ Healing: Everyone has the capacity to heal him or herself to one degree or another. Clearly, this ability is variable and depends upon a number of factors such as your genetic background or your overall state of health and lifestyle (exercise, diet, smoking, drinking, etc.) Many people believe that the surgeon “heals” the patient. No one person can make another heal. Dr. Stefanacci can facilitate (but not accelerate) the healing process. Your cooperation and close attention is extremely important and in your best interest.

- ✓ Following Instructions: Another major factor in the course of healing is following the instructions given by Dr. Stefanacci verbally and in this booklet. Such guidelines are designed to promote the healing process and prevent anything from interfering with your recovery. It is imperative that you recognize that you are a partner in this process and have the responsibility of following instructions carefully. The instructions, based on broad experience, are designed to maximize your healing process.