

### **INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING ABDOMINOPLASTY SURGERY**

This leaflet aims to answer many of the questions you may have and to help you recover after your operation. However, you should always follow any specific advice given to you by Mr Kirkpatrick or his nurses.

#### **General Anaesthesia**

Following a general anaesthetic, we advise you not to consume alcohol, to avoid signing legal documents, avoid using or operating machinery or drive for a minimum of 24 hours.

We strongly advise that a responsible adult collect you from hospital and stay with you for the first 24 hours.

#### **Pain Relief**

In hospital you will be given regular pain killers; it is a good idea to continue to take regular analgesia for the first few days at least or for as long as you need them. Paracetamol will usually suffice.

**Do not** take any Aspirin or Ibuprofen as they may cause bleeding and added bruising.

#### **Healing/Wound care**

It is very important that you leave the dressings that you have over your abdomen **in place and kept dry** until you see Mr Kirkpatrick for your post operative appointment. This will usually be within a week after your surgery. Mr Kirkpatrick's nurse will change the dressings at this time. Further dressings may be applied for another week. The sutures used will usually be dissolving. It is also important that if you are given a support garment or an abdominal binder that you wear it continuously until your post-operative appointment. **Do not** soak in a hot bath, as this may increase bruising. You may however take off the binder for showering, but you must put it back on immediately following this. Mr Kirkpatrick will advise how long you will need to wear the pressure garment; usually for about 6 weeks

#### **Rest and Activity**

It is strongly advisable that for the first two weeks following your operation that you get as much rest as you can. Have nothing planned to do for this time.

For the first week following surgery it is also advisable to put a pillow under your knees when in bed, and when you are walking to walk slightly bent over; this is to take the strain off the new wound and the stitches.

You should not do any lifting at all for the first week following surgery. You can then gradually begin lifting and carrying light objects.

Sporting activities, gym activity and heavy lifting are to be avoided for the first six weeks after your operation.

TED stockings should be worn for four weeks following surgery.

Driving should be avoided for the first week after surgery. This can normally resume following your post-operative appointment, but please check with Mr Kirkpatrick at this time.

#### **What is 'normal' after surgery?**

It is normal for there to be a moderate amount of swelling in the upper and lower abdomen and the pubic area.

You can expect changes in sensation in the abdomen including numbness, increased sensitivity, possible pins and needles and even sharp shooting sensations. These will all settle over the coming weeks and months.

It is possible that a collection of fluid (Seroma) gets trapped in the abdominal space behind the wound; this may appear as a slightly swollen area usually after the first week or two. Depending on the size of the collection, Mr Kirkpatrick will decide on whether to leave it alone, as it will gradually be re-absorbed by the body; or remove it very simply.

If you do not have a follow up appointment with Mr Kirkpatrick, please phone his secretary on 020 7927 6512 to arrange one.

If you have any further questions or concerns in the meantime you can call Mr Kirkpatrick's practice on 07749517909 and speak to his practice nurses. Or alternatively, you can contact Anna Paris, Clinical Nurse Specialist for Plastic / Cosmetic Surgery at the Wellington Hospital on 020 7586 5959 Bleep no 7891.

