



**Midtown 404-686-8143**  
**Emory Aesthetic Center 404-778-6880**

## **WHAT TO EXPECT FOLLOWING PANNICULECTOMY**

### **Your Procedure**

- You may go home the same day or you may remain in the hospital for one night following your surgery.
- Before you are discharged from the hospital your pain will be adequately controlled with oral pain medication.

### **Activity**

- In order to prevent blood clots it is important to walk around as much as possible following this surgery.
- No heavy lifting more than 10 pounds. No sports or exercise for 6 weeks.
- You may not drive for several weeks until you are comfortable wearing a seatbelt and have been cleared to do so.
- Rest and take naps as needed throughout the day. You may feel tired the first few weeks after surgery.
- When sleeping, you need to use additional pillows under your head, back, and under the knees. You should remain in a Beach chair position to reduce tension on your incision. Do not lay flat at any time until you have been cleared by your surgeon to do so.
- You should walk slightly bent forward at the hips to reduce tension on your abdominal incision for 2 weeks.



- Place pillows under the knees and behind the back to keep this position at home.

### **Pain**

- You were prescribed pain medications. Take them as needed for pain. As your pain decreases you will be able to decrease the use of the narcotic pain medication and control pain with Tylenol only.
- You may take Ibuprofen if you discussed this with your surgeon or your surgeon prescribed this medication.
- If you were prescribed a narcotic pain medication, it can cause constipation. In order to avoid constipation, increase your fluid intake. You may also need to take a stool softener, such as Colace. If constipation persists, you may try Milk of Magnesia (available without a prescription).
- Do not drive or drink alcohol while taking pain medication as it can make you drowsy and impair your judgment.
- Do not smoke (or use tobacco, vape or nicotine products), as smoking delays healing and increases the risk of complications. This includes the use of nicotine patches, gum, and e-cigarettes.

### **Diet/Appetite**

- You may resume your pre-surgery diet.
- Drink plenty of fluids, at least eight glasses of 8 ounces each day to help prevent constipation associated with pain medication.

### **Caring for Your Wound:**

- It is normal to have some bruising and swelling after surgery.
- You may shower, but no tub bathing, soaking, hot tubs, or swimming for 4 weeks after surgery, unless told otherwise by your surgeon.
- You may have tape strips on your incision. These can get wet in the shower. After the shower, pat dry. They will start to dry and peel off on their own in the next 7-14 days. If they have not fallen off after that time you may remove them yourself.
- If your wound has oozing or drainage, you may cover it with a dry dressing. Please be sure to change it every day.
- If you were provided with an abdominal binder or garment in the hospital, please continue to wear this at all times except while showering. You should continue wearing it for one month. You can wash it but do not put it in the dryer. You can buy an additional binder on Amazon if you wish but make sure it fits the same way as the binder given to you by your surgeon.
- Do not put creams or ointments on your incision. This will not make your wound heal faster.
- You will be discharged with drains in place. The nurses will teach you how to empty and record your drain output.
- Please attach the drains to a belt or necklace made from string, so that they do not pull on your skin while taking a shower. The nurse will review how to do this prior to discharge.
- Do not use heating devices such as heating pads, hand warmers, or electric blankets near the surgical area. This can damage the tissue and result in a severe burn. Also avoid the use of ice or cold packs for the same reason.

### **Medications**

- Resume your pre-hospital medications. Follow-up with your primary care physician regarding new prescriptions or refills of your home medications.

**Follow-Up Appointment**

- If you are not given a follow up appointment when you leave the hospital, call the surgeon's office and make an appointment to be seen within 1-2 weeks after your surgery.
- At this appointment, we will check your incision and remove any drains and/or stitches. Your surgeon will also discuss the results of the surgery and your treatment plan.

**Call the Surgeon's Office if:**

- You have a fever greater than 101°F, chills, nausea, vomiting, leg pain, increased incisional pain not relieved with pain medication; if you notice signs of wound infection (redness/tenderness at or pus discharge from your incision); bleeding that does not stop; or if you have other concerns. **404-686-8143 or 404-778-6880**
- Please call 911 or go to the closest Emergency Department for any life threatening emergencies such as shortness of breath or chest pain.
- Do not use the patient portal for urgent or emergent questions.