

SCOTT J. ZEVON M.D., F.A.C.S.
CENTRAL PARK PLASTIC SURGERY

ABDOMINOPLASTY (TUMMY TUCK) PATIENT INFORMATION

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MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY
FOR AESTHETIC PLASTIC SURGERY

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AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
PLASTIC AND RECONSTRUCTIVE
SURGEONS

ABOUT ABDOMINOPLASTY

- **INTRODUCTION:** We want our patients to be comfortable with the decision to have surgery. Please read this information carefully and ask us any questions you may have. During your visit, Dr. Zevon will show you before and after photos of patients who resemble you. We can put you in contact with patients who have had the surgery if you would like references. We will offer you a tour of our surgical suite, which is certified by the American Association for the Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgical Facilities. We will give you a quote for your surgery, and information about financing options if desired. If at any time you have questions about this surgery, please do not hesitate to ask them. You should feel comfortable discussing your goals and expectations with Dr. Zevon. An educated patient is the ideal candidate for plastic surgery.
 - Abdominoplasty is a surgical procedure performed on the abdomen to remove excess skin and fat, tightening the muscles. In some women, pregnancy causes the skin and muscles of the abdomen to become loose and flabby. In men and women, cycles of weight gain and loss create a layer of loose excess skin and weak stretched-out abdominal muscles. Abdominoplasty can correct these conditions.
 - Abdominoplasty is not a weight reduction procedure. Although the surgery removes some fat, the ideal candidate is at or near normal weight before surgery. Abdominoplasty is not a substitute for weight loss accompanied by a balanced moderate or lowfat diet and regular aerobic exercise.
 - If you plan to have children, you should not have an abdominoplasty, as the entire abdomen will stretch with pregnancy. You should wait until you have finished having children.
 - Full abdominoplasty is suitable for patients requiring maximum correction. An incision is made low on the abdomen at the level of the pubic hair. The muscles of the abdomen are tightened with stitches, and muscle weakness is repaired. The umbilicus (belly button) stays in the same position on the abdominal wall, but a new opening in the skin is usually created for it. For patients requiring lesser correction a more limited procedure with shorter incisions may be performed, mini-abdominoplasty. This more limited surgery may be performed under local anesthesia for some patients. After examining you, Dr. Zevon will tell you whether full or mini-abdominoplasty will give you the desired result.
 - Some abdominoplasty patients also have liposuction. If you are having liposuction, read the patient information for that procedure as well as for abdominoplasty. Where the instructions differ for two procedures, follow the instructions that are more restrictive. Ask Dr. Zevon if you have questions.
 - **OPTIONS FOR PAIN CONTROL:** Dr. Zevon prescribes oral pain medication for abdominoplasty patients. We recommend taking the oral pain medication before going to bed the first night after your surgery. At this time, you are in a transitional period when your surgery anesthesia is wearing off and the post-surgery discomfort is increasing. It's easier to be comfortable if you don't allow yourself to experience too much pain—that is, if you feel significant pain increasing, take the pain medication before your pain is “out of control”. We have a new pain control option available for patients having abdominoplasty. This option, called a “pain pump”, consists of a source of non-narcotic local anesthesia Dr. Zevon can insert at the end of your surgery. The pain pump will produce a steady flow of medication during the first week after your surgery. If you think you may be interested in the pain pump, tell Dr. Zevon at your pre-op visit so he will have it available for use during your surgery. Dr. Zevon will remove it 1 week after surgery.
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PREPARING FOR SURGERY

STARTING NOW

- Please read and familiarize yourself with Dr. Zevon's **Abdominoplasty Patient Information**. By following all instructions carefully you will assist in obtaining the best possible result from your surgery. If questions arise, do not hesitate to communicate with Dr. Zevon and discuss your questions at any time. Re-read Dr. Zevon's **General Instructions for Cosmetic Surgery**.
- PERSONAL INFORMATION SHEET:** Locate your **Personal Information Sheet** and complete it so that Dr. Zevon's office will know who will escort you home after your surgery, how much time to call ahead for your pickup after surgery, and where you plan to spend the night of your surgery. State law requires someone to pick you up after surgery with anesthesia. If you prefer to hire someone to perform this task, ask us for a referral to a nursing agency. Dr. Zevon will call you the evening after your surgery. It will be easier for him to reach you if you fill out the form completely and print clearly.
- STOP SMOKING AS SOON AS YOU CAN BEFORE SURGERY FOR BETTER HEALING AND BETTER OUTCOME.** If you are a smoker planning to have abdominoplasty, Dr. Zevon recommends that you stop smoking one month before your surgery. If you are having difficulty abstaining from cigarettes, talk to Dr. Zevon and he will try to help you develop a plan to taper off cigarettes before your surgery. Don't try to hide your smoking, as this may have consequences for your health.
- INSTRUCTIONS AND MEDICAL HISTORY:** Read your green sheet of **Pre-Operative Instructions** and make sure you know where it is for easy reference. During the two-week period before your surgery, don't take aspirin, ibuprofen, NSAIDs or Vitamin E, and don't take any medications, vitamins, nutritional or herbal supplements without Dr. Zevon's permission. When you arrived in our office the first time, you were given a **Medical History Questionnaire**, inquiring about any medications, allergies, personal and family medical history, smoking and drug use. If you aren't sure you disclosed all allergies, medications, past medical history, existing conditions and smoking status, or if any of the foregoing have changed since your initial visit, be sure to discuss any omissions, changes and/or new information with Dr. Zevon.
- ACTIVITY RESTRICTIONS:** Read the **Activity Restrictions** in your **Post-Operative Instructions** so you will understand what you will not be able to do during the first few weeks after your surgery. Collect phone numbers for home delivery of items you may want to have delivered. Since you may be at home for a while, have some books, tapes, DVDs, CDs or other home entertainment on hand. Some patients feel more comfortable with ice on their abdomen after surgery. You can use well-padded ice packs for this purpose or bags of frozen peas. Whatever your preference, make sure you have the ice readily available as you may wish to use it during your first few days at home.
- MEDICATIONS:** Fill your prescriptions before surgery and make sure you know where they are

PRE-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

THE DAY BEFORE YOUR SURGERY

- NOTHING TO EAT OR DRINK AFTER MIDNIGHT.**
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- If you are having local anesthesia or your surgery is in the afternoon, check with us as to what or when you may eat or drink before surgery.
 - Make sure your escort has our address, directions to the office and information about parking if needed. Tell your escort we will have an extra copy of your **Post-Operative Instructions** for him/her to pick up and read. If your escort or location for the first night has changed, call our offices with the new information.

THE MORNING OF YOUR SURGERY

- WASHING:** Shower or bathe with anti-bacterial soap. Wash the surgery areas thoroughly. Do not apply any moisturizers, deodorant, talcum powder or other products afterwards. Do not use hairspray or perfume.
- CLOTHING:** Wear simple, comfortable, loose-fitting, dark colored clothing. Wear tops and bottoms that are easy to pull on, and comfortable shoes. No high heels or pantyhose. Do not wear new clothes. Sweat pants are ideal. Do not bring jewelry or valuables. Bring a case for contact lenses if you wear them, and bring glasses if you need them as it may be awkward to put your contact lenses in immediately after your plastic surgery.

POST-OPERATIVE CARE IMMEDIATELY AFTER SURGERY

- RECOVERY ROOM:** You will feel sleepy or groggy when you awake from anesthesia. The length of your stay in the recovery room will depend on how quickly you feel ready to sit up and leave on your own. During this time, you will be monitored. You will spend at least 30 minutes to an hour in the recovery room. When Dr. Zevon thinks you are ready to depart, he will ask the OR nurse to help you get dressed. Your escort and our nurse will help you into your vehicle (car or taxi). Because you will be groggy, you should expect to move slowly and carefully. We will have a set of your **Post-op Instructions** at our reception desk for your escort.
- REST:** When you arrive home, be prepared to rest in bed for the first 48 hours after surgery. Eat lightly and drink to replenish your body fluids. You may go to the bathroom with assistance as needed. If you feel nauseated, lie on your back with your head down and remain still. Any sensation of nausea should pass by the morning after your surgery. You may experience difficulty standing up straight during the first week or so because your abdominal muscles and skin have been tightened. The most comfortable position for you may be sitting up or lying down with your knees bent and supported by one or two pillows. The least comfortable position is to lie flat on your back with your hips flat and your knees straight. Don't lie flat! Place the pillows under your thighs and behind your back, not under your head. The abdominal tightness will gradually disappear as you heal and move around.
- PAIN:** After abdominoplasty, most patients are comfortable enough to move around at home between 2 and 4 days after surgery. Most patients take the prescribed oral pain medication. **DON'T**

DRIVE WHILE TAKING PAIN PILLS! The pain pump is a non-narcotic option for pain control. If you think you are interested in a pain pump, tell Dr. Zevon during your pre-op visit. In addition, placing ice bags padded with a towel over the abdomen may relieve discomfort significantly.

- MEDICATIONS:** Take the antibiotics and pain medication prescribed by Dr. Zevon according to the pharmacy instructions. Don't take the pain medication on an empty stomach, as this will produce nausea and vomiting. Have another adult give you the pain medication at the correct time and/or keep written records of how much you take and when you take it. You do not have to take the pain medicine if you are not in pain, but you must take all of your antibiotics. Do not drive while taking pain medication.
- WHAT TO EXPECT:** Swelling of the abdomen is normal following abdominoplasty. During the first week, your clothes may be tighter, and you may weigh more than before. The swelling subsides starting in the second week after surgery, but some fullness persists in the lower abdomen. Expect to see about 50% of the contour improvement in 2 weeks, 75% at 1 month, and the remainder by 3 months after surgery. Occasional patients may see subtle continued improvement up to 6 months after surgery. Some areas of your abdomen will feel numb or have diminished sensation. Normal sensation will return gradually over several months, but some diminished feeling may last indefinitely. Full abdominoplasty patients will have a horizontal scar low on the abdomen (below the bikini line) and a circular scar within the umbilicus (belly button). In some patients a different type or location of scar may be necessary because of individual variations in anatomy. You should discuss your incision lines with Dr. Zevon. Be assured that he will keep the scars as short and inconspicuous as possible.
- CALL DR. ZEVON IF** you have severe pain not responding to pain medication or your dressings seem too tight. **DON'T TAKE CHANCES! Call if you are concerned about anything you consider significant.** During office hours, call (212) 496-6600. After hours, call (917) 612-3800.
- HYGIENE:** Full abdominoplasty patients may shower 48 hours after surgery, after Dr. Zevon removes the dressings. Mini-abdominoplasty patients may shower when their bandages are removed the day after surgery.
- DRESSINGS & DRAIN CARE:** At the time of surgery, gauze dressings and an abdominal binder will be applied around the abdomen. These will be removed from 1-2 days after surgery and will be replaced with clean dressings, which will remain in place until your drains are removed 4-10 days after surgery. Drains evacuate the fluid that accumulates after surgery and enable you to heal faster. Secure the bulb of the drain to your dressings or clothes with a safety pin. Twice a day or whenever the bulb is half full, empty the bulb by opening the plug at the top and pouring out the contents. Do not attempt to remove the bulb from the tubing. Squeeze the bulb to recompress it, and put the plug back into the hole at the top. If the bulb fills rapidly after emptying, or you need to empty it more than three times a day, please call us. Dr. Zevon will remove the drains when the fluid begins to turn a clear straw color and/or the amount of drainage has diminished. Showering with the drains in place is okay.
- ACTIVITY RESTRICTIONS:** Most patients return to normal activities and to work 10 to 14 days after surgery. Strenuous physical activities are prohibited for 6 weeks. You may sleep on your back

or on your side, but don't sleep on your stomach for 4 weeks. Don't sit in the sun for heat for 4 weeks.

- DRIVING:** For planning purposes, you can anticipate that you will not be able to drive for a week or so. You may find that you are ready to drive in less than a week, or that you are not ready at the end of the first week. Dr. Zevon usually tells patients not to drive until they are recovered sufficiently that if they were driving and had a car accident they could truthfully state that the recent surgery had no impact on their ability to react in the emergency.
- SCARS:** Your scars will be firm and pink for at least six weeks. Then they may remain the same size for several months, or even appear to widen. After several months, your scars will begin to fade, although they will never disappear completely. You should use sunscreen if you are in the sun in a bathing suit during the first year after your surgery.
- HERBAL REMEDIES:** Some patients report that arnica contributes to a reduction in bruising or swelling, resulting in reduced discomfort and edema, and improved healing. Ask us if you wish assistance in locating a source of arnica. Take arnica orally according to manufacturer's instructions on the packaging.
- POST-OPERATIVE APPOINTMENTS:** At each post-operative appointment, Dr. Zevon will advise you how soon the next one should be scheduled. A typical schedule is first visit in 5-7 days, second visit in 7-10 days, third visit in 12-14 days, and fourth visit in one month. Check your post-operative instructions for your first appointment. If you don't have an appointment, call (212) 496-6600, tell the receptionist the date you had surgery and she will schedule your post-operative appointment. The purpose of the appointments is for Dr. Zevon to treat you as necessary, to make sure that you are healing properly and to allow you to return to normal activities consistent with your personal healing schedule. These appointments are the time to ask him about any questions or concerns you have about your recovery. Some patients find it helps to keep a list of questions to ask during each appointment.

RECOVERY TIME

- INITIAL:** 1 – 2 weeks for the resolution of pain. Contour improvement will begin to appear at 2 weeks.
- SUBSTANTIAL:** Swelling and numbness will gradually subside within 1 to 3 months. Expect to see 75% of the contour improvement in 2 months, and the balance in 3 months.
- FINAL:** Occasional patients may see subtle contour improvement up to 6 months after surgery.

RESUMING NORMAL ACTIVITIES

- WORK:** Follow the plan you and Dr. Zevon have agreed upon. For planning purposes, you can assume that you can return to a desk job in 5 to 7 days, other jobs 10 to 14 days.

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- **EXERCISE:** Avoid contact sports and other vigorous activity, including strenuous sexual activity, for 6 weeks. Dr. Zevon will give you permission to increase your activities according to the progress of your recovery and your overall fitness level. During this time, walking is fine. Dr. Zevon will give you permission to increase your activities according to the progress of your recovery and your overall fitness level.

 - **EXPOSURE TO SUNLIGHT:** Scars take at least one year to fade to their greatest extent. During this time, it is advisable to protect them from the sun. Even through a bathing suit, sunlight can reach the skin and cause damage. Use a high SPF sunscreen. We carry sunscreens suitable for post-surgery patients.

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