



CANADIAN PLASTIC SURGERY CENTRE

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR PANNICULECTOMY

First 24-48 Hours After Surgery

Arrange for a responsible adult to stay with you for the first 24 hours.

Do not drive, make important decisions, or drink alcohol while taking post-op medications.

Medications

Your prescribed medications include:

- **Acetaminophen** – for pain relief (take 4 times daily – approximately every 6 hours)
- **Celebrex (celecoxib)** – to reduce inflammation (take 2 times daily – approximately every 12 hours)
- **Ondansetron** – to help prevent or relieve nausea (take 2 times daily – approximately every 12 hours)
- **Keflex (cephalexin)** – an antibiotic to prevent infection (take 4 times daily – approximately every 6 hours) *This medication must be taken until finished.*
- **Stool softener** – to help maintain bowel regularity during recovery (take once daily at bedtime)

Do not take extra doses unless specifically instructed by your care team. Continue the full course of antibiotics even if you feel well.

Additional Pain Medication

You have also been prescribed a narcotic pain reliever:

- **Hydromorphone** – Take 1–2 tablets every 4–6 hours **as needed for pain.**

This medication is not meant to be taken routinely and **should only be used when needed** for breakthrough pain.

Do not resume driving until you are off all narcotic medications and feel you can react quickly and comfortably in an emergency.



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Diet & Hydration

Start with clear fluids and advance as tolerated. Stay well-hydrated. Aim for at least 6-8 glasses of water per day.

Try to consume a diet that is high in protein and fibre.

Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and salty foods in the early recovery period.

Constipation & Bowel Care

It is common to experience slowed bowel movements or constipation after surgery. This may be caused by:

- The effects of general anesthesia
- Prescribed narcotic (opioid) pain medications
- Reduced physical activity

To help maintain bowel regularity during your recovery, you have been prescribed a stool softener.

- Take one dose daily at bedtime, as directed.
- Do not take additional laxatives unless approved by your care team.
- Stay well-hydrated
- Include high-fibre foods in your diet (vegetables, fruits, whole grains)
- Walk short distances several times per day, as movement supports digestion

Smoking & Vaping

Do not smoke or vape during your recovery. Nicotine reduces blood flow and delays healing, increasing the risk of wound complications.



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Dressings & Wound Care

- Leave dressings in place unless otherwise instructed.
- Change dressings only as directed.
- Keep incisions clean and dry.
- Do not apply creams, ointments, or other products unless approved by your surgeon/nurse.

Drain Care (if applicable)

If you go home with surgical drains to remove excess fluid it is important to follow your Postoperative Instructions for Drain Care closely. Use the Drain Care Record to record the volume of drainage each time you empty your bulb(s).

- *Do not tug or pull on the drains. They have been sutured in and this will cause discomfort.*

Drains are typically discontinued once they produce less than 30mL in 2 consecutive 24 hour periods.

Notify nursing@canadiansurgery.com if the drainage becomes foul-smelling, or changes colour significantly.

Bathing & Showering

- Do not submerge in water (baths, pools, hot tubs) until cleared by your surgeon/nurse.
- You may shower after your dressings have been changed at your first follow up visit, unless otherwise directed.
- Remember to pat incisions dry gently. Avoid scrubbing.

Compression Garments

- Wear your surgical binder for 6 weeks or as otherwise instructed. Ensure it fits snugly but not so tight that it causes numbness or pain. Do not remove for extended periods unless instructed.



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- Wear your compression socks for 10-14 days as instructed by your surgeon/nurse. You may remove the socks only when you shower or go to bed at night as your feet are up.

Mobility & Activity

- Short walks several times per day help prevent blood clots in the lower legs. Aim for a short walk in your home once hourly while awake.
- Avoid strenuous activity, bending, exercise, or lifting more than 10 lbs, for at least 6 weeks.
- Once approved by your surgeon/nurse, you may gradually return to normal activities as tolerated.

Lymphatic Massage

To support your recovery, we recommend postoperative lymphatic massage treatments to the liposuction site starting 3 weeks after surgery. These massages can help reduce swelling, promote healing, and improve results.

Sleeping Position

- Sleep on your back with your head slightly elevated and a pillow under your knees.
- Avoid sleeping flat or on your stomach or on your side.

Signs of Infection or Complication

Call our office if you experience:

- Fever over 38.5°C (101.3°F)
- Increased redness, warmth, or pus at incision site
- Severe pain not relieved by medication



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- Swelling that is worsening on one side
- Foul-smelling drainage

For symptoms like pain in one calf, with redness, and warmth to the touch, please visit your nearest emergency department.

For symptoms like difficulty breathing or chest pain, please call 911.

Emergencies

In case of a medical emergency, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency department.

Then notify our office at nursing@canadiansurgery.com as soon as possible.

Contact Information

Clinic Phone (During Business Hours): 437-523-4196

After Hours Questions or Concerns: nursing@canadiansurgery.com

Follow-Up Appointment: Date _____ Time _____

If you are ever unsure about something during your recovery, **please reach out.**