

MY RECOVERY JOURNAL

When patients are contemplating plastic surgery, they usually spend a good amount of time thinking, researching and deciding. But once that decision is made, they want the surgery “as soon as possible.”

Certainly the combination of excitement and anticipation is understandable — but the best experience comes from knowing what to expect ... being prepared at each step ... and allowing adequate time for recovery.

Let this journal be your guide.



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KEVITCH
CHUNG & JAN
AESTHETIC SURGERY ASSOCIATES

610-HER-BEST
610.437.2378

The most favorable outcomes are the result of the surgeon and the patient working together. Ask any and all questions you may have. Be honest with us and with yourself about what you want. And take the time you need to prepare ... and to recover, quickly and completely.



IT'S ABOUT TIME.

Most of us lead very busy, very hectic lives. And taking enough time off to recover fully is often what our patients tell us is the most difficult part of cosmetic surgery. And when they feel better than they expected to feel ... it's easy to try to cut the recovery time short. Please remember that if you try to do too much before your body is ready ... your recovery time could actually take longer.

These are the average recovery times we estimate by procedure. Please consult with your doctor to determine the time that's right for you, based on your health and your lifestyle.

Breast Augmentation	one week
Breast Lift	one week
Breast Reduction	two weeks
Arm Lift	two weeks
Liposuction	one week
Tummy Tuck	four weeks
Mommy Makeover	four weeks
Body Lift	four weeks
Brow Lift	one-two weeks
Face Lift	two weeks
Eyelid Surgery	two weeks
Gynecomastia	two weeks
<i>(breast reduction for men)</i>	

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A FEW WEEKS BEFORE SURGERY ...

Do a little research ... ask a lot of questions

In addition to the excitement and anticipation you have concerning the results of your upcoming surgery, it's natural to feel nervous and anxious. One of the best ways to deal with that anxiety is to know exactly what's happening and when. We'll provide you with all the information you need ... and we encourage and expect you to ask a lot of questions. Oh ... but please. The right source for those questions is your doctor — not your friends, acquaintances, or Wikipedia — no matter how well-intentioned those sources might be.

You'll get by with a little help from your friends

The best reason to have cosmetic surgery is that you want it. It's your decision, and it's a very personal one. So prepare yourself for people you may run into who will question your decision or tell you you don't need it. We all know people who are naturally a little negative ... and hopefully, those who are usually positive, see the good side of things, and are able to lift your spirits. Those are the people you want to ask to be on your support team.

How long you'll need support really depends on you and your procedure. Talk it over with your doctor, and start lining up your team.

You absolutely, positively, must have someone to:

- drive you to and from surgery
- stay with you for at least the first 24 hours
- drive you to your first post-op appointment

And don't forget:

- if you care for small children or elderly parents, you'll need someone to take care of you, AND someone to take care of them
- if there are pets in the house, especially those who like to jump up and greet you, you may want to consider a pet sitter

If you color your hair and you are having a facelift and/or browlift, be sure to have your hair colored before surgery as you will not be able to have it colored for four weeks following surgery.

DO'S AND DON'TS

DO

Eat healthy

Exercise moderately

Use effective birth control

Quit smoking

Talk about your meds
with your Doctor

DON'T

Crash diet

Overdo it

Get pregnant

Smoke

Take OTC drugs
and vitamins

Eat healthy

This is not the time to crash diet. Many of our patients think, for example, "I'll look even better after this procedure if I lose those extra pounds." But the truth is your body needs adequate nutrition to aid the healing process. So eat a healthy, balanced diet ... and avoid alcohol until after recovery.

Exercise moderately

You'll want to maintain your fitness level, but definitely avoid injuries. So don't overdo exercise or exertion. Exercises such as yoga or pilates — that emphasize stretching and strengthening your core — are a good idea. Light cardio and weight training, as well as anything that focuses on your posture will help you post-surgery.

Use effective birth control

Any woman of child-bearing years must take a pregnancy test before her procedure. And every once in a while, she gets a big surprise, one that postpones any kind of surgery.

Quit smoking

Smoking makes recovery from surgery more difficult. This is even more important for plastic surgery. Plastic surgeons operate at the limit of what the circulation to the skin and other tissues will allow. When removing fat and tissue, they must leave enough vessels intact, and ensure that there is adequate blood flow through the remaining vessels. Of all the things that can affect this blood flow, cigarette smoke is the worst. So congratulations! You are now a nonsmoker!

Talk about your meds with your doctor

Two weeks before your surgery, you should stop taking over-the-counter medications. Aspirin, diet pills, and even vitamins can cause bleeding after surgery, increase swelling, raise blood pressure, or alter your sugar levels.

Stop Taking:

- Aspirin, Advil or Motrin
- All diet pills, or herb blends designed to control appetite
- Chromium
- Vitamin E
- Echinacea
- Ephedra
- Feverfew
- Fish Oil
- Flaxseed
- Garlic
- Ginger
- Ginkgo
- Ginseng
- Goldenseal
- Kava-Kava
- Licorice
- Saw Palmetto
- St. John's Wort
- Valerian Root

YOUR PRE-OP APPOINTMENT

Lab Tests

When you come in for your consultation, we may order lab tests to be done prior to your surgery. You will have the tests done by your primary care physician or lab, so you should make sure we have received those results before your appointment.

Medical Records

If your surgeon needs to see your medical records from another doctor, we'll have you fill out the required release forms and fax them while you're in our office. Please check with us and/or the other office to make sure we have your information before your appointment.

Prescriptions

Sometimes prescriptions are given ahead of time, and sometimes you receive them the day of surgery. Please make sure you know how you will keep track of the medications you're taking because it's easy to get confused when you're groggy. This is a perfect job for your support person.

Note: If a prescription is to be taken "as directed" that means you take it until it is gone. Antibiotics are a good example. If it is to be taken "as needed" that means use it to treat symptoms, such as pain or nausea. If you don't need them, don't take them. If you do need them, don't take more than is instructed on the bottle.

PREPARING THE PERFECT RECOVERY ROOM

Stock it with:

- **Dial Antibacterial Foamy Soap**
Cleans well, but gently ... just what you need after surgery.
- **Senakot**
Because pain medication can be constipating.
- **Dressings**
Regular gauze can stick, but maxi pads and panty liners work well!
- **Flex Straws**
Makes drinking in beds easier and safer
- **Traction Socks**
If you have slippery floors, nonstick bottoms are great.
- **Single-serve snacks and meals**
You probably won't feel like cooking.
- **Entertainment**
A great time to catch up on your reading. If you prefer TV shows and DVDs choose programs that lift your spirits, but won't make you laugh out loud. Especially after a tummy tuck.

Arrange it so:

- There's a table next to your bed with room for everything from the remote control to your cell phone to a pad to write down questions.

- Keep your medications on the bedside table, so they're always at hand.
- Make sure all important phone numbers are programmed into your phone. Especially ours ... 610-437-2378 ... and people who will cheer you up and bring you chocolate.
- Have lots of pillows and blankets around. You deserve to be comfortable.

And you'll be glad you did:

- **Clean out your purse.**
Carrying around a heavy purse is something many of us do. But depending upon your procedure, you might not want the extra weight. Simplifying is always a good idea; but especially now.
- **Pick out the clothes you'll want to wear during recovery ahead of time.**
And put them in easy reach. Reaching up or bending over might not be the most comfortable things to do. Loose, elastic waist pants ... and button-up shirts and PJs are always a good idea.
- **Stash some extra cash.**
You might want your caregiver to run out to the grocery or the drug store.

- **Organize the pantry and the refrigerator.**
Depending on the procedure, there's a good chance you won't want to lift anything heavy ... reach up high ... or bend over too low. So it's a great idea to strategically place the items you're going to want on the easiest-to-reach shelves. And buy the smaller, easier to handle size containers.
- **Use paper plates and plastic utensils.**
Leave them on the counter in easy reach. If you drop them, they don't break. You throw them away so there's nothing to wash. And they're lighter to handle.
- **Make sure the bathroom is stocked.**
Place your toothbrush, toothpaste and deodorant on the counter within easy reach. Make sure you have plenty of toilet tissue, and even better — wet wipes. Reaching and stretching may be uncomfortable for a short time, and removing compression garments to go to the bathroom can be a little difficult at first. Might as well make it as easy on yourself as possible.

One more tip:

Many of our patients say that getting your hair and/or nails done just before surgery can go a long way toward making you feel better during recovery. You deserve a little pampering, don't you?

THE DAY BEFORE SURGERY

- Drink lots of fluids today, but avoid alcohol. Eat three moderate-size healthy meals.
- Expect a call from the surgery center about anesthesia.
- Remove dark-colored polish from your fingernails. (The pulse oximeter needs to be able to shine through.)
- Confirm your arrival time and your route to and from the surgery center with your caregiver who will be driving you.
- Remove all jewelry and remove all piercings so you don't forget tomorrow morning.
- Nothing to eat or drink after midnight! Nothing means just that. Gum ... mints ... everything counts.

Make sure to bring your driver's license and insurance cards. If you wear glasses, bring an eyeglass case. No contacts allowed. Bring some crackers for the ride home in case you experience some nausea, and a pillow and throw blanket in the car might make you feel more comfortable.

Now, relax and go to bed early.

TODAY'S THE DAY

Final Check List:

- I had nothing to eat or drink since midnight last night.

 - I showered and washed my body with antimicrobial soap either last night or this morning.

 - I have not put on any makeup, perfume, hair spray or panty hose.

 - I know where I'm going and _____ is driving me, picking me up, and staying with me for at least 24 hours after surgery.

 - I'm giving myself plenty of time to get to the surgery center on time.
- I'm wearing loose-fitting clothing with a shirt that buttons up the front and shoes that are easy to walk in.

 - I'm not wearing contact lenses or any jewelry. I have removed any piercings and dark nail polish.

 - I have my I.D., insurance cards, eyeglasses and case ... and crackers, pillow and blanket in the car.

 - I'm riding in a car that is easy to get in and out of, and my driver understands the need to drive cautiously.

IN RECOVERY (Be sure to share this with your caregiver!)

◆ *Rest.*

But be sure to get up at least every two to three hours and walk around. If you feel groggy or unsteady, make sure your caregiver is beside you, but it's important to be ambulatory.

◆ *Keep your head and chest elevated.*

Two or three pillows behind your back will do the job quite comfortably. And if you've had a tummy tuck or a body lift, prop up your knees with a pillow or rest in a recliner.

◆ *Do breathing exercises.*

In order to prevent fluid from building up in your lungs as a result of the anesthesia, at least once an hour, take five deep breaths. Put a pillow against your tummy and cough three times. If you were given stretching exercises to do, do them faithfully.

Unless you've had a facelift ...

◆ *Drink plenty of fluids.*

Fluids are critical after surgery. Drink at least eight ounces every two hours. Water and Gatorade are best. Don't drink carbonated, caffeinated or alcoholic beverages. If you're not getting up to use the bathroom every couple of hours, you're not drinking enough!

◆ *Use your ice packs.*

Remember, 20 minutes on ... and 20 minutes off, while you're awake. When they defrost, have your caregiver put them back in the freezer.

◆ *Start eating slowly.*

Start with a little jello, soup and crackers, or toast. It may take several days to work up to regular meals. Avoid salty foods, as they can increase swelling during recovery.

◆ *Wear your post-surgery garments.*

Wear your surgical bra or compression garments around the clock. They can be taken off only to bathe.

◆ *Don't smoke. And don't let anyone around you smoke.*

Smoking will drastically affect your ability to heal. And second-hand smoke is just as bad.

*Relax. Don't do anything stressful.
Let your caregiver take care of you.*

REASONS FOR CONCERN

Call 911 immediately if you experience:

- Chest pain
- Trouble breathing
- Lose consciousness
- Any other medical emergency

*Call our office — 610-437-2378 —
immediately if you experience:*

- Fever of 101.5 degrees or more, severe nausea and vomiting, dizziness or incoherent behavior such as hallucinations
- Any pain that can't be controlled by your pain medication
- Bright red skin that is hot to the touch
- Excessive bleeding or fluid seeping through the incisions
- One breast that is much larger than the other or bruising that is localized to one breast or region of the chest
- Inability to urinate
- A suspected reaction to one of your medications

If it is after hours, call to speak to the physician on call for instructions.

SHOWERING AFTER SURGERY

If you feel up to it, you may bathe or shower the day after your surgery.

You'll need some help from your caregiver in case you get dizzy in the shower. This is when a shower chair comes in handy. If you don't have one, a plastic outdoor chair or a folding chair will work.

If you are showering with drains, place a small towel around your neck and pin the drains to the towel.

You may remove everything down to the skin and sutures. This includes dressings, but not drains. Proceed slowly, and sit down if you feel dizzy or groggy. Shower gently ... using your antimicrobial foamy soap on your incision sites and around your stitches. You may wash your hair.

When you get out of the shower, put your surgical bra or camisole on, then the binder or compression garment and the rest of your loose fitting clothing.

THE EMOTIONAL SIDE OF RECOVERY

Emotional reactions to surgery can vary widely. It's important for you and your caregiver to understand what to expect. The most common emotional reaction is to be excited but uncomfortable for the first few days. You have, after all, just had surgery. But frequently around day 3 to day 5, a little depression

can set in. You may not be healing as quickly as you expected, and you may start to second-guess your decision. This is all perfectly normal.

Procedures with longer recovery times, such as tummy tucks and body lifts, tend to have more

emotional tough times. You may wear out your caregiver. But be assured ... things do get better, and you'll be back to feeling like your old self soon. Especially when you've given your recovery the time it needs to show you the results you were after in the first place.

PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE — 610-437-2378

*We understand that you may have questions.
Please call us!*

- **If you can't remember, or are unsure, about any instructions, CALL.**

There's a lot to absorb, and it's understandable if you aren't quite sure about something. We are happy to clarify.

- **If you are not sure about resuming activities, CALL.**

For the first few weeks, your exercises and medications will be restricted. If you're not sure about whether it's okay to resume or start an activity, let us clarify.

- **If you have something that doesn't quite look right, CALL.**

It's normal for some areas to heal a little differently, but if you have a concern, please call and let us set your mind at ease.

- **If you feel a lot worse than you thought you would, CALL.**

This is most likely temporary, and many patients are surprised that they feel worse a few days after surgery than the day after, but that's normal. However, if you feel differently than you expected to given the information we provided, give us a call. We can frequently give you advice over the phone to help.

If you have any of the symptoms we listed under "Areas of Concern" call our office AT ONCE or go to the nearest emergency room immediately. These could be signs of something serious. Don't take a chance.

COMMON COMPLAINTS AFTER SURGERY

Drains ... be patient. They're there for a reason. The drains placed underneath your skin are necessary. Depending on your procedure, you may have to deal with them for up to a week. Yes, we understand you don't like them. But don't remove them prematurely. It's important to keep track of how much fluid you empty from them over a 24-hour period. If you have any questions or concerns about your drains, call us.

Swelling ... the best treatment is patience. It's natural to feel "puffy" after a procedure. And yes, we understand that you're in a hurry to see the results. Especially after a tummy tuck, you want to see that flat abdomen and that swelling just gets in the way. Be patient. It takes time.

But there are things you can do.

- Avoid salty foods. Salty increases swelling.
- Keep wearing your compression garment around the clock.
- Walk ... as much as you can comfortably, as often as you can.

DO NOT take diuretics, unless the medication is prescribed for blood-pressure control. They won't help the swelling, but they will cause dehydration.

THERE WILL BE SCARS.

Any time an incision is made, there will be a scar. Our surgeons work diligently to make scars as invisible as possible, but they are going to be there. The secret is to place the scar where it will be the least noticeable. Your body has natural creases that provide natural camouflage.

Our surgeons make the incisions as tiny as possible in those natural creases or where they will be hidden. Your scars will continue to improve for about a year. We do recommend scar reduction gels, creams and silicone sheets to improve your scar.

SEX AFTER SURGERY

When you can resume normal sexual activities after plastic surgery depends on the person and the procedure. It goes without saying that pain is a pretty big turnoff. If you have drains, hold off. If special positioning is indicated for your recovery, hold off.

You'll probably want to wait several weeks after a tummy tuck ... having weight on a part of the body that is healing is not usually comfortable. The most important indicator is when the patient who is recovering feels ready for sex.

For some people, physical closeness while healing may be comforting. For others, even though completely healed, they may feel uncomfortable about their scars. Talk to your partner about any issues, and work through them together.

Usually, common sense will give you the answer. If it doesn't feel good, don't do it.

But if you have any other questions or concerns, please call us. We've undoubtedly dealt with the issues before.

Help us get the word out.

We believe very strongly that anyone performing plastic or cosmetic surgery should be certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery. Look for the logo. And tell your friends and family that it makes a difference. There are doctors and others who perform cosmetic surgery procedures without the proper surgical training. It's happening right here in the Lehigh Valley.

Ask for credentials before you think about any cosmetic procedures.

Member



An ASPS member surgeon:

- Has at least six years of surgical training, with three years specifically in plastic surgery.
- Is certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery.
- Operates only in accredited medical facilities.
- Adheres to a strict code of ethics.
- Fulfills continuing education requirements, including patient-safety techniques.

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