

Care after Thigh Lift

This page contains answers to frequently asked questions regarding your care after thigh lift. This information will help you to remember the instructions given to you after surgery.

What will I see when I look into a mirror?

For most thigh lifts, a custom fit garment will have been placed on you just after your surgery. This garment holds the dressing materials over your incisions. You may see some drainage on these bandages particularly at the groin area and possibly just above your knees. This is normal.

When will I be seen in the office after surgery?

You will normally be seen in the office two to three days after your surgery for your first dressing change and to remove the bladder catheter if one was placed. Additional appointments are at about two weeks, six weeks, and six months after surgery to monitor healing. Additional appointments may be necessary.

When can I shower or take a bath?

You normally can shower after your first dressing change using a mild fragrance free soap such as Ivory or Dove. Avoid using very hot water. Your thighs will be tender, so wash this area gently and pat dry with a clean towel. Allow the area to fully dry before putting on your garment (usually ½ hour). I will inform you when it is safe to take baths.

Should I wear a support garment?

Compression garments are needed to control the swelling that will occur in your legs after a thigh lift procedure. Initially a custom fit garment is used but other lighter, stretch garments can be used starting 3 to 4 weeks after the surgery. After 6 weeks, you may choose to not wear a support garment for brief periods of time. After 12 weeks you may discontinue all support garments.

What can I do after surgery?

You will find that walking will be uncomfortable just after the surgery but this will improve rapidly. You should walk every day but have someone assist you for the first few days. You may find that sitting will be more uncomfortable than standing or lying down for a few days. Again this improves quickly. You should gradually return to your normal activities and exercise routines. Depending on the type of work you do, you should be able to return to your job as soon as you are comfortable. If your job does not require heavy activity, you should be able to go back in about two weeks.

When can I drive?

You generally should be able to drive about five to seven days after surgery if you feel up to it. You should never drive if you are still taking any pain medication other than Tylenol.

How much pain will I have?

The most discomfort that you will have lasts one to two weeks, sometimes a little longer. As you feel more comfortable, your need for medication will be less.

What medications should I use?

I will prescribe a pain medication for you and may also provide medication for nausea. Follow the directions on the bottle for their use. The pain medication will make you feel drowsy. Have someone assist you in your home and do not attempt to drive while you are taking the pain medication. A few days after surgery most patients will find that Tylenol will take care of the discomfort. Do not use aspirin or ibuprofen (Motrin) for five days after the surgery.

Can I drink alcohol?

Do not drink alcohol for five days after your surgery or while taking narcotic pain medicines.

How will I know if I am having a problem?

Urgent problems after thigh lift do not occur frequently. These are the complications that will require a change in your post-operative care:

Hematoma (blood collecting under your incisions) can occur within a few days of your surgery. The warning signs are:

- Severe pain that does not respond to medication
- Significant swelling in one or both thighs
- Excessive or growing bruising

Infection is rare following thigh lift. It is normal to have a small amount of drainage from the incisions for a few days. Signs of infection are:

- Increased temperature
- Increasing drainage from the incisions
- Increasing redness around the incisions

Leg swelling with this procedure always occurs to some degree and is due to your surgery, intravenous fluids given to you during the surgery, and your decreased level of activity. This swelling is normally mild and affects both legs evenly. If you have a large amount of leg swelling (either one or both legs) or if you experience pain in your lower legs contact the office immediately.

Breathing problems after thigh lift are rare but can be a serious complication. If you develop any chest and/or back pain or the feeling of being short of breath you must contact my office or be seen in the nearest emergency medical facility without delay.

Medication reactions may occur with the drugs prescribed for you. If you develop a skin rash, itching, vomiting, or diarrhea, stop taking your medication and contact my office.

If you have any of the above problems or other questions, contact my office.