



6 Tips to Prepare for Surgery After Massive Weight Loss

Remember before your Weight Loss Surgery: Researching whether you were a candidate? Searching for the right surgeon? Learning about the different operative procedures? Attending support groups? Weeks of trying to accommodate your diet and starting an exercise regimen? You became an active participant, engaged and committed to ensuring the success of your surgery. And it worked! Congratulations on your weight loss!!!

Weight Loss Surgery Is A Journey!

As you have certainly discovered by now, weight loss is a journey, with unpredictable bends in the road. There may be great satisfaction with each step on the scale,

“ GAINING EXPERIENCE THROUGH WLS POPULARITY

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watching the weight come off and the numbers drop. But that may be coupled with wonder and frustration. Your body may not be changing the way you had hoped. Your breasts and bottom may be shrinking, but your belly and love handles may not. You may notice loose, redundant skin, and your mirror might not yet be your friend.

Rest assured, you are the beneficiary of the popularity of bariatric surgery and general weight loss that has occurred over the last 15 years. Plastic surgeons are now much more sophisticated in our approach to the aesthetic concerns that go along with weight loss, and we have greater ability to manage the changes in the skin and soft tissue that accompany weight gain and loss. We are more educated and can better address the nutritional consequences of bariatric procedures. Know that for that lax neck, there is a neck lift or facelift; for sagging breasts, there are mastopexies (breast lifts), with or without implants; to fit that outfit you have been eyeing, there are body lifts and back lifts.

Looking Forward to Plastic Surgery

Remember the great success that you had with your bariatric procedure, and if you are considering body contouring or other plastic surgery procedures, try to adopt the same deliberate approach to ensure optimal outcomes. Simply put, nothing substitutes for thoughtful preparation for your upcoming surgery! With that in mind, consider the following tips for your upcoming procedure, and best of luck!



DO RESEARCH

Do your homework! Research the procedure and your surgeon. Make certain that they are certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery and have an interest and considerable experience in Massive Weight Loss body contouring. Check that the facility for surgery is accredited, and that you will be under the care of a Board Certified Anesthesiologist. Go into surgery with confidence in your decisions and absolute trust in your team!

2**COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM**

If you have any medical issues, make certain to discuss them with your surgeon and internist to optimize your care and minimize the risk of complications. Diabetes? see your endocrinologist. On medications for your joint pain? confer with your orthopedist. History of depression? speak with your therapist about what to expect after surgery. Absolutely try to ensure that you doctors communicate with each other! Also make certain to discuss lines of communication before surgery. Know how to reach your health care team after hours and understand who will be covering when your doctor is unavailable.

3**SCHEDULE SURGERY THOUGHTFULLY**

Schedule your surgery at the “right time.” Make certain that you can take adequate time out of work to ensure your recovery. You want to test the limits of what you can tolerate, physically and psychologically, before reassuming all of your professional obligations and responsibilities. You may need to arrange child care for several weeks. You do not want to “squeeze in” surgery at a stressful time in your life or a time that will not permit a comfortable, safe recovery.

4**BUILD YOUR SUPPORT STAFF**

Arrange with family and friends in advance to assist you early in your recovery. Determine each person’s role on your team, and discuss their responsibilities and how you hope that they can contribute to your recovery. If necessary, research and engage support from professional agencies to help. Make certain that you address transportation needs, not just for the day of surgery, but also for your first several follow up visits.

5**PREPARE YOUR HOME**

- Fill your scripts in advance. Consider getting a stool softener to combat constipation related to pain medications and probiotics if you get GI distress from antibiotics. Consider throat lozenges and chapstick, as well.
- Load your fridge with foods easy to digest, low in sodium to limit swelling, and high in protein to aid healing. Make certain that there are plenty of fluids to maintain hydration. Consider food preparation before surgery.

- Prepare 1-2 recovery spaces in your home with pillows for positioning, the TV remote, books, and your computer... Have batteries and chargers, sports bottles for no spill drinking, and maybe a notepad and pen handy to jot down questions and concerns.
- Set up comfortable sleeping arrangements.
- Prepare comfortable clothing that will be easy to change into and out of, preferably with some pockets for drains. Consider robes and slippers.
- Purchase dressing supplies in advance.
- Buy bathing supplies in case your surgeon restricts showers and baths.
- Prepare the rest of the home by completing other projects: mow the lawn, do the dishes, take care of laundry...



BE REALISTIC

This can be a challenge, but is essential in the success of your surgery: have realistic expectations for your recovery process and for the ultimate result!

All surgery is taxing, and the magnitude of massive weight loss body contouring can make recovery arduous. Thoughtful preparation, however, can ease some of the difficulties during the early post-operative period and help make recovery far more manageable. Hope you will consider these tips and best wishes for an easy and fast recovery!

Congratulations, and good luck!

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Harvard-Trained Board Certified Plastic Surgeon, Dr. Larry Lickstein is in private practice at the Bitar Cosmetic Surgery Institute, a full service cosmetic center in the Washington DC area. A former attending physician at the prestigious Cleveland Clinic, Dr. Lickstein was named a top doctor by Baltimore Magazine and the Castle Connolly Listing for 10 consecutive years. Dr. Lickstein is passionate about improving the lives of his patients and takes a comprehensive approach combining his skills with the latest technologies at the Bitar Institute.