**What to Expect: Panniculectomy**

A surgical procedure to remove the excess “apron” of skin and fat from the lower abdomen.

**Insurance Criteria**

This procedure is only approved for insurance coverage if medically necessary. Each insurance company has a set of guidelines that often include (but are not limited to):

* 75-100 pound weight loss and stable weight for 3-6 months
* Pannus (lower skin fold) hanging below the level of the pubis
* Documented chronic rash beneath the skin fold requiring medical therapy
* Functional impairment (ie. difficulty with exercise due to overhanging pannus)

**Procedure Details**

Through a horizontal incision from hip-to-hip, excess fat, tissue and skin are removed from the lower abdomen. The upper abdomen is not contoured and will not change.

* **Duration of surgery**: 2 hours
* **Hospital stay**: 1 night observation.

**Before Surgery**

You may be scheduled to undergo pre-operative testing with the Anesthesia team in the Weiner Center, where they will review your medications and medical problems. Do not eat or drink after midnight the evening before your surgery. You may take required medications with a sip of water. Call the Weiner Center at 617) 732-7484 with questions about your medications and when to stop them.

**After Surgery Care**

It is normal to feel tired and washed out after surgery. Often the pain medication and anesthetic will make you feel tired. Pace yourself according to how you feel. Total bed rest is not desirable – you should walk several times a day beginning the day after surgery.

* **Pain**: You will be given a prescription for a narcotic pain medication, such as Oxycodone. This medication may cause constipation, nausea and drowsiness and you should not consume this with alcohol or drive when taking this medication. You should take an over-the-counter stool softener (Colace or Senna) to prevent constipation. You may also take over-the-counter Tylenol or Ibuprofen for pain. Your abdomen will be numb for several weeks to months. This will improve with time.
* **Scars and stitches**: There will be a horizontal scar from hip-to-hip with dissolving stitches. There is often skin glue overlying the incisions, which will flake off in 2-3 weeks.
* **Drains**: You will go home with 2 suction drains, one drain at each hip. These drains are left in place until the output is less than 20ml in 48 hours. These usually remain in for 7-14 days but can remain in longer. You will receive information on how to care for the drains after surgery.
* **Abdominal Binder**: Wear the binder at all times until 12 weeks after surgery.
* **Activity:** Walking is important to reduce risk of post-operative problems. No heavy exercise for at least 3-4 weeks after surgery. No abdominal exercise or heavy lifting for 12 weeks.
* **Bathing/Showering**: Avoid showering until your drains have been removed. You may sponge bath but do not get the drain sites wet.
* **Driving**:You may resume driving when you are off all narcotic pain medication and feel comfortable turning quickly if there was an emergency.
* **Follow up**: Schedule a postoperative appointment with Dr. Talbot’s clinic 1 week after surgery. Call 617-732-4288 with any questions or concerns.