

PLASTIC SURGERY **PLANNER**

TIPS TO MANAGE A SPEEDY RECOVERY



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
PLASTIC SURGEONS

H/K/B
KNOXVILLE COSMETIC SURGERY

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PlasticSurgeryRecoveryProducts.com

WHAT'S INSIDE: I am fond of telling my patients that surgery is a team sport. While the patient is the star player, he or she is supported by a team consisting of their caregivers, well-wishers and family, me and my office staff, and the staff of the hospital or surgery center. And like all successful endeavors, careful planning is key for a victory on game day. When it comes to surgery, this is all about preparing for both the operation, and the recovery. Think of this *Plastic Surgery Planner* as your playbook. It is good for you to read it well ahead of your surgery, and to share it with the members of your team who will be helping with your recovery.

(There is a lot of very good information in the following pages, and it is primarily intended for my patients. However, much may apply to patients of other plastic surgeons who are also planning for surgery. However, these folks are not my patients and thus I cannot and should not give the specific advice about their surgery. Always consult your plastic surgeon for issues regarding your surgery.)



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THE PLASTIC SURGERY PLANNER

If you're like most patients scheduling plastic surgery procedures, you probably have a lot of questions. More than likely you've talked to some friends who have had procedures and have done some research online. We know that the preparation, planning and recovery from plastic surgery can get pretty overwhelming. So we thought you would appreciate some advice and strategies from some people in the know....us.

In the next several pages, we are going to drill down into the nitty gritty of how to prepare for your plastic surgery, and what to do to recover well and quickly. These are best practices that we have learned

throughout the years, mainly by listening to our patients, but also in some cases by having the procedures done ourselves.

What you're reading now was actually inspired by one of our super-organized Mommy Makeover patients. She very kindly wrote us a detailed diary of the knowledge she gained during the process about what made her recovery easier. So we are dedicating *The Plastic Surgery Planner* to her and to our other patients who share what they learn so that all patients may benefit. We can't thank you enough.



Melissa
Nurse Injector



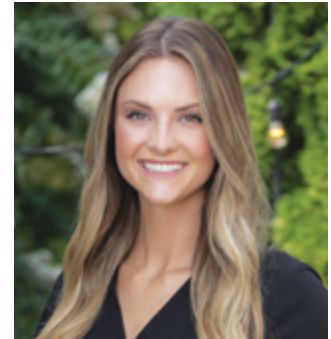
Natasha
Surgical Coordinator



Cassina
Medical Assistant



Christy
Licensed Aesthetician



Morgan
Patient Care Assistant



HONOR THY RECOVERY

“Recovery is about time. And time is our most precious commodity. None of us can add another hour to our days (even if we work nights), another day to our months or another year to our lives. So we are naturally careful and jealous of our time.

The time of recovery from surgery—time away from work and normal activities—is a major concern. Frequently finding the time to recover is **THE** major stumbling block when it comes to scheduling an operation.

It’s understandable. We all lead busy lives, so it’s very hard to get enough time off from work to recover fully. And because time is at such a premium, many of us try to trim down, or cut short the time that we need to recover. Trying to get back into the swing of things before you are ready can sometimes cause your recovery to take longer.” — Dr. Reath



If there were ten commandments about plastic surgery, one of them would be “Honor Thy Recovery.” Those who do will find the whole process easier, and the ultimate outcome better.

RECOMMENDED TIME OFF FOR POPULAR PROCEDURES

These recovery times are the average time patients take off from work to recover from their surgery. If your job is physically strenuous, you'll need more time.

Likewise, downtime is a particular concern to our facial plastic surgery patients. If you bruise easily or are or very concerned that no-one know you had anything done, you may need longer so factor that in.

Breast Augmentation – 1 week

Breast Lift – 1 week

Breast Reduction – 1 week

Brachioplasty (Arm Lift) – 1-2 weeks

Liposuction – 1 week

Gynecomastia (Male Chest Reduction) – 1 week

Tummy Tuck – 3-4 weeks

Mommy Makeover – 4 weeks

Body Lift – 4 weeks

Brow Lift – 1-2 weeks

Facelift – 2 weeks

Eyelid Surgery – 1-2 weeks



IT IS ALWAYS BETTER TO SCHEDULE **MORE**
RECOVERY TIME THAN YOU THINK YOU'LL NEED.

It will be a nice surprise if you can back to your routine early, and you'll avoid the stress of worrying about whether or not you'll be ready.



START GETTING YOURSELF IN THE RIGHT MINDSET

You are getting ready to have plastic surgery!

Most of our patients have been dreaming of this day for quite some time. It is normal to be excited and at the same time very nervous and apprehensive. After all, big changes are coming your way.

Your positive mental attitude will go a long way in ensuring that you recover well and have the outcome you've always wanted. We do have some suggestions that work well to manage those nerves so you can show up the day of your surgery relaxed and ready to go.

One of the biggest causes of anxiety is the fear of the unknown. Expect that as your surgery date gets closer, you're going to have more questions that come up. Write them down as you think of them so you don't forget to ask when you come in. This goes for your pre-op appointment, the day of your surgery or any of your follow-up visits. *Remember that we are here for you, no question is stupid and we are just a phone call away.*



The Internet Is And Is Not Your Friend. Once you've made your decision to have plastic surgery and are comfortable with your choice of physician, whether it is Dr. Reath or another Board-certified plastic surgeon, don't go second-guessing yourself. If you have a concern, ask your doctor, not Google. Now is not the time to torture yourself by searching online for bad plastic surgery outcomes.

Prepare Yourself For The Haters. As much as you can, surround yourself with positive people, but know that you may run into folks who will question your decision to have surgery. Some are kind and will tell you that you look great as you are. Others may be opinionated, vocal and even jealous. Just expect that this could happen at some point either before or after your surgery and don't get blindsided. It helps to recognize that this is your decision not theirs.

That said, if you find yourself feeling debilitated by fear at the thought of your surgery, you may want to do some more thinking.

START LINING UP YOUR SUPPORT TEAM

Most of our patients are very independent and let's face it- they're used to being the ones who provide support for others. So when you are planning on having elective plastic surgery, it can be uncomfortable asking others for help. But this is one thing that you *cannot* do alone.

The amount of help you'll need really depends on your situation. Many patients take care of others as a normal part of their routine. If you have young children or elderly parents at home you'll need double- duty support....for you and for them. This is the perfect time for the kids to visit grandma, just make sure that you have someone else at home appointed to take care of you.

At the bare minimum, *and we mean the very barest minimum*, you'll need someone to drive you to and from your surgery, stay

with you for 48 hours after your procedure and drive you to your first post-operative appointment. For more extensive procedures like tummy tucks, body lifts and mommy makeovers, you'll need someone to stay with you for at least the first week.

NO TAXIS!

We have had patients who want to have someone drop them off for their surgery and then call a cab to bring them home. This is a big no-no. Don't even think about it. Besides all of the patient safety reasons why this is a very, very bad idea, the surgery center won't release you to a taxi driver.

If you really don't have someone who can drive you and stay with you at home after your surgery, we can hook you up with a reliable home health care service that is very reasonably priced. Just ask.



Ask A Positive Person To Be Your Caregiver

You know who they are: the people in your life who always lift your spirits. You want someone who's really going to put your needs first and who won't say to you when you first get home, "Why in the world did you do this to yourself?" Get someone supportive and caring because you're really going to need that.



START A HEALTHY DIET

So if you get the best results from your surgery the closer you are to your ideal body weight, now must be the time to go on a super low-calorie diet right? **WRONG!** We hear this all the time from patients planning their surgery. Contrary to popular belief, crash-dieting before your surgery is completely counter-productive.

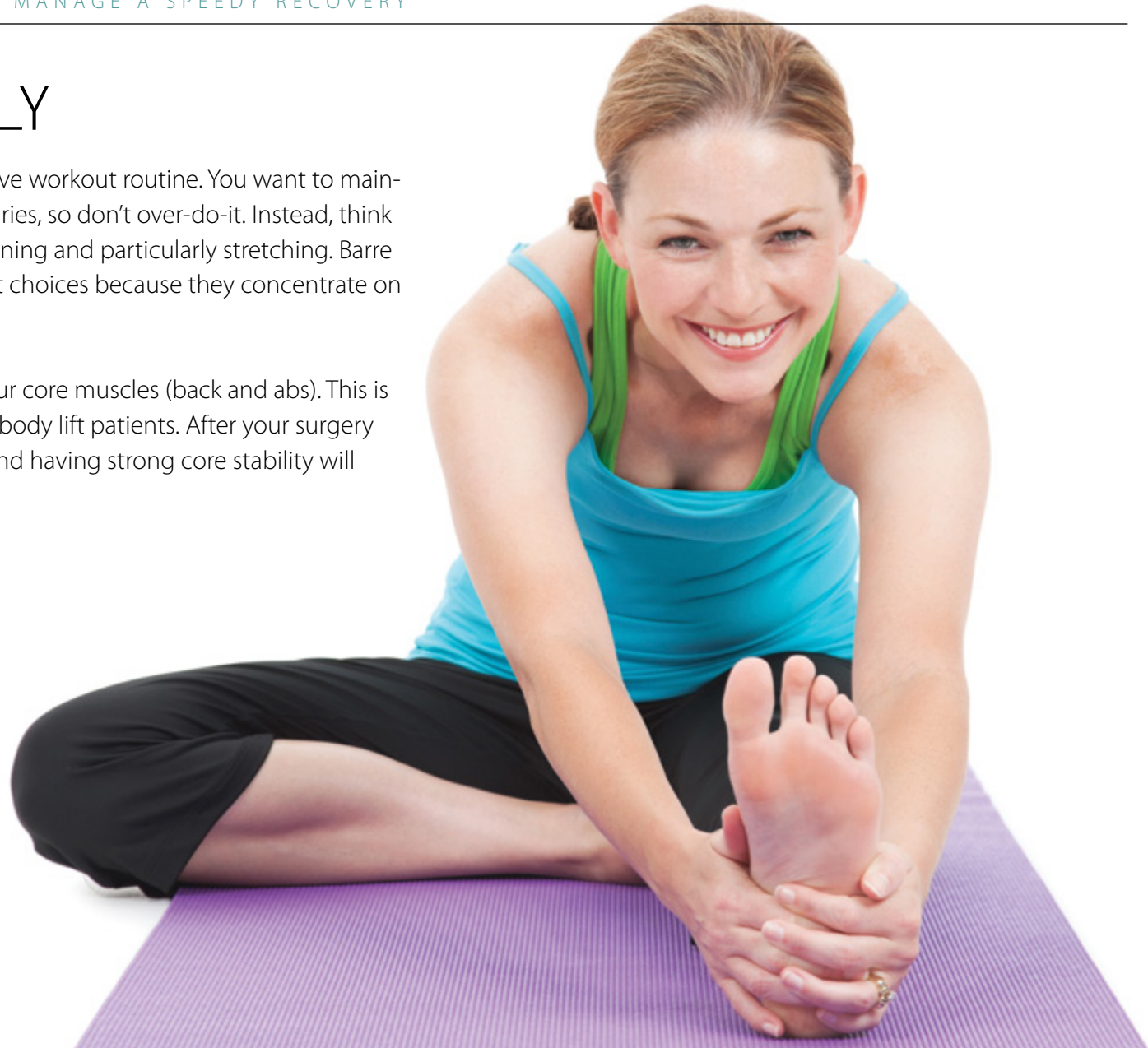
Your body needs protein, iron, nutrients and yes, even fat, to recover properly. So eat a healthy, balanced diet, skip the booze and don't go crazy cutting calories.



EXERCISE WISELY

Now is not the time to start a new aggressive workout routine. You want to maintain your level of fitness while avoiding injuries, so don't over-do-it. Instead, think about light cardio, low-weight strength training and particularly stretching. Barre workouts, yoga and Pilates classes are great choices because they concentrate on your overall well-being and posture.

Focus on strengthening and stretching your core muscles (back and abs). This is particularly important for tummy tuck and body lift patients. After your surgery you won't be walking upright for a while, and having strong core stability will help prevent back pain.



WE KNOW THEY LOVE YOU AND WANT TO HELP, BUT...



START THINKING ABOUT YOUR PETS

Ok, this is one time when your dog or cat may not be your best friend. Pets like to jump up to greet you and sleep in your bed. Plus, they are easy to trip over. And they need to be let out, fed, watered and taken for a walk.

So, if you have pets, be sure to take them into consideration when you are preparing for your surgery. You won't feel like getting out of bed anymore than you have to for the first couple of days.

DO NOT GET PREGNANT!

This may seem obvious if you are planning to have plastic surgery, but go with us on this one. If you are a female who could *conceivably* get pregnant (good one), you always take a pregnancy test at the surgery center before your procedure.

At least two of these a year come back positive- resulting in the shock of their lives for our patient (I'm whaaaaat?!) Cross our hearts: it happens. So bye-bye surgery. At least for the next nine months.

BOTTOM LINE: If you are sexually active, be sure you use effective birth control. This goes for after your tummy tuck and mommy makeover procedures too. Having another child after an abdominoplasty undoes all the good work we've done together.



JUST QUIT!

It's no secret that smoking is bad for you. Most people are aware that it can hinder your recovery after any surgery, but not many people understand that this is a much bigger issue when you're having plastic surgery. This is because plastic surgical operations, live on the edge of your blood supply.

When doing these operations, plastic surgeons are really operating at the limit of what the circulation to the skin and other tissues will allow; living on the edge so to speak. But, in order to have adequate circulation, they not only need to leave enough blood vessels intact, they must also make sure that the blood which flows through these blood vessels is sufficient. Certain things can affect this blood flow and the biggest and baddest of these is cigarette smoke. Although the nicotine in the cigarette smoke is the most dangerous element, the carbon monoxide and the hydrogen cyanide don't help much either.



SERIOUSLY, WE DON'T WANT YOU TO HAVE ANY PROBLEMS HEALING AFTER YOUR SURGERY. WE CAN'T EMPHASIZE THIS ENOUGH. **YOU ARE NOW A NON-SMOKER.**

AND NO E-CIGARETTES EITHER

We're seeing more and more patients who are using electronic cigarettes. Although they may contain less toxins for your lungs, they DO contain nicotine, which is what delays healing.



STOP TAKING THESE OVER-THE-COUNTER DRUGS AND VITAMINS!

Aspirin, diet pills and common vitamin supplements can interfere with anesthesia, cause bleeding after surgery, increase swelling, raise blood pressure or alter your sugar levels. Two weeks before your surgery, you should quit taking aspirin, all herbal supplements and everything listed below until at least two weeks after your surgery.

DON'T TAKE:

- Aspirin, Ibuprofen or Naproxen (Advil, Motrin, Excedrin, Aleve)
- Any diet pills or herb blends designed to control appetite
- Vitamin E
- Chromium
- CoQ10
- Echinacea
- Ephedra
- Feverfew
- Fish oil
- Flaxseed
- Garlic
- Ginger
- Ginkgo
- Ginseng
- Goldenseal
- Kava-Kava
- Licorice
- Melatonin
- Saw Palmetto
- St. John's Wort
- Valerian Root

If you take the diet pill Phentermine, you MUST stop it at least 4 weeks prior to your surgery date.



CONSTIPATION: A REGULAR OCCURRENCE

It's so true. It's the most common phone call we get from our patients. Surgery patients are prone to constipation and here's why:

- **Anesthesia:** Most people think of anesthesia as something that puts us to sleep. It also puts the intestines to sleep. It can take them a while to "wake up".
- **Pain Medication:** The most common side effect of pain medication is constipation, so when you combine that with the effects of anesthesia you have a double whammy.
- **Changes in the way you eat and drink:** Because you can't eat or drink anything after midnight, you may already be low on fluid going into your surgery. The combination of too little fluid and no food intake can work against your body's normal routine of elimination.
- **Inactivity:** Getting up and walking or being active is one of the triggers for a bowel movement. Suddenly spending most of your time in bed resting doesn't help. When you are recovering from surgery, it can be miserable to also suffer from pain and bloating. Luckily we have some very good suggestions for how to deal with this.

PREVENT WITH PROBIOTICS

Sometimes patients think we're weird to suggest they start taking medical grade probiotics before their surgery. After all, it's an added expense and won't make that much of a difference right? Wrong. Those who take the VitaMedica Probiotic-8 do much better after surgery. We're believers and the science is starting to catch up with us.

Pick some up at your pre-op appointment or order them on our online store. **\$40**



TWO WAYS TO TREAT IT

The Home Remedy aka "The Constipation Cocktail"

Twice daily mix ½ cup prune juice with ¼ cup of water. Warm in the microwave. Drink. Immediately follow with 8 oz cold water.

The Traditional Way

Just to be on the safe side, you may want to have a laxative in your medicine cabinet. Milk of Magnesia or Miralax are good choices.





An empty stomach means one hour before or after a meal.

START TWO WEEKS PRIOR

VITAMEDICA CLINICAL SUPPORT FOR SURGERY: These multi-vitamins are specifically designed for patients pre- and post-surgery, so they contain all of what you need and none of what you don't. Start two weeks prior to surgery and continue taking them two weeks after. Take the AM tablets with breakfast and the PM tablets with dinner or before bed.

VITRON-C IF YOU NEED IRON

Patients who are having breast reductions or extensive body procedures may require extra iron. You'll start two-three weeks prior to your surgery. Take at bedtime and the dosage will depend on your labwork.

START THREE DAYS PRIOR

VITAMEDICA BROMELAIN WITH QUERCETIN: The combination of Bromelain, made from pineapple enzymes and quercetin reduces swelling and inflammation after surgery. Most patients will start their Bromelain supplements 3 days before and continue until 7 days after their surgery. Take two capsules, three times a day on an empty stomach. Bromelain is included in your complimentary recovery kit.

*Do not take Bromelain if you are allergic to bees, pineapple, latex, have heart arrhythmias or take blood thinners. If you are not a patient of our practice, don't take Bromelain without discussing it with your own doctor first.

Only rely on the advice of your own doctor who is familiar with your medical history and care. Always call your doctor's office with specific medical questions.

VITAMEDICA PROBIOTIC-8: Start two weeks prior to surgery once a day on an empty stomach, and increase to twice a day following your surgery.

All Vitamedica supplements are available in our online store.

Clinical Support Vitamins	\$44
Probiotic-8	\$40
Bromelain with Quercetin	\$38

DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS.

LAB TESTS

When you come in for your consultation, Dr. Reath may order lab tests to be done prior to your surgery. If we do the test here in the office, we'll have the results the next day and review them. So no worries there. However, if you have a test done at a radiology center or some other office, you'll want to follow up with us to make sure that we have received the results before your pre-op appointment. That's important.

MEDICAL RECORDS

The same things goes for medical records from other doctors. If Dr. Reath needs to see records from your other doctors, we'll have you fill out the records release form and we'll fax it while you're here in the office. Please touch base with us and the doctor's office sending us the records to help make sure we have your health information on hand. We need everything prior to your pre-op appointment so there will be no delay in your surgery date.

Lab test results and medical records should be faxed to 865-450-9949.



PRESCRIPTIONS

You'll have the prescriptions you need before surgery. Go ahead and get them filled right away so you're not having to drive through your pharmacy on the way home from the surgery center. Not fun.

***If you're from out of state, you'll need to have them filled while you're here in Tennessee due to changes in the opioid laws. We'll help with that.**

Once you have them, be sure to double check that everything looks correct. Read the instructions, become familiar with what you have and call us before your surgery with any questions or concerns.

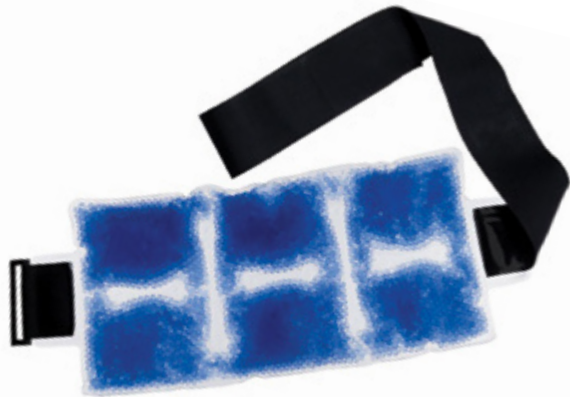
Be sure to come up with a system of how you are going to keep track of what medications you've taken and when because it's easy to lose track when you're groggy.

You should know: There is a difference between taking prescriptions "as directed" and "as needed." "As directed" medications are the ones you take for a set period of time until they are all gone, for example, your antibiotics. "As needed" medications are taken to treat a symptom, for example, your pain pills, nausea medication and muscle relaxers, if prescribed. If you don't need them, great! If you do need them, don't take them more frequently than what is instructed on the bottle.

SURGERY SHOPPING LIST:

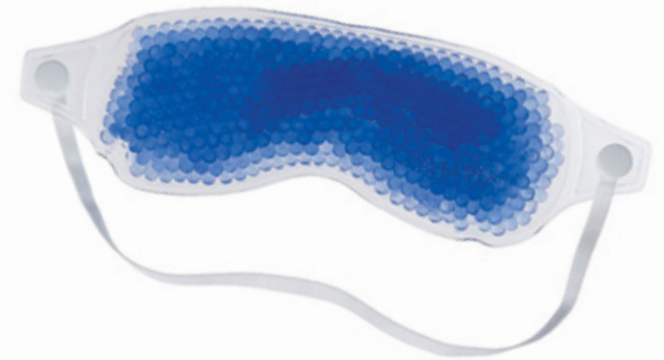
Must Haves

WE'VE PUT TOGETHER A LIST OF SUPPLIES YOU'LL WANT TO HAVE ON HAND TO MAKE YOUR RECOVERY AS COMFORTABLE AS POSSIBLE.



THERAPEARL ICE PACK WITH STRAP:

THE HANDY STRAP MAKES IT STAY ON WHEN YOU ARE WALKING AROUND AND ALSO WHEN YOU FALL ASLEEP.



THERAPEARL EYE MASK:

IF YOU ARE HAVING EYELID SURGERY, YOU'LL GET A THERAPEARL EYE MASK IN YOUR SURGERY KIT.



SURGERY SHOPPING LIST:

Nice to Haves

FLEX STRAWS: These little guys make drinking in bed so much easier.



SINGLE-SERVE NUTRITIOUS SNACKS AND MEALS: You'll get hungry and won't feel like cooking. Think soup, jello, Power bars, fruit, nuts, real fruit popsicles, etc. Single servings of carrot dippers, apple dippers or hummus also work great. If you are super-industrious, consider cooking ahead and freezing some individual portions of your favorite meals that you can defrost and eat after your surgery.

MOISTURIZING SKIN WIPES: When you don't feel like getting out of bed to wash your face and do your regular skin care routine you'll be glad you have these.

COLGATE WISPS: Brush your teeth and freshen your mouth without water.

RAZORS WITH BUILT-IN SHAVE BARS: When you are shaving after your surgery, you'll want it to be as easy as possible. Our two favorites are Venus Breeze or Schick Intuition.

EXTRA CLOTHING: (Body Patients) You are going to be wearing a binder after surgery and you'll need a good supply of camisoles (gals) or undershirts (guys) to wear under your binder. You find that's much more comfortable. For male chest reduction patients, you'll need extra compression shirts and they should fit snugly. Under Armour works well and is easy to find.

DRESSINGS: You'll need dressings for your incisions. You don't want to use regular gauze because that sticks. Guess what is inexpensive and works great? Cotton maxi pads for tummy tuck and body lift patients and panty liners for breast and liposuction patients. Guys, you might want to pay a bit extra for non-adhering dressings. Just sayin.

TRACTION SOCKS: If you like to wear socks around the house, score a pair of these cool socks with no-slip bottoms.

SURGERY SHOPPING LIST:

Nice to Haves



Michael Kors is going to hate us for saying this but that huge purse has got to go... at least while you're recovering from surgery.

It's normal to start getting back to your routine and wonder why you're so tired out. Well, part of it is the natural tendency to do too much too soon. The other part is dragging a heavy purse all over the place. That we can work with.

If you normally carry an overstuffed handbag, go through it before your surgery and be brutal. Remove everything that you don't really need (most of it we don't need all the time, right?)

HIPSTERS: These little guys are life-savers for patients following surgery, and everyone in our office is obsessed with them. Carry your phone, car keys, credit cards, some cash and your favorite lip gloss easy peasy. If you've had a tummy tuck, you'll appreciate the secure feeling of extra compression around your waist. After you're fully recovered, it's super-handly when you travel or run Lakeshore.

5" Hipster **\$25**

7" Hipster **\$29** (tummy tuck patients will want these)

To purchase Hipsters visit our online store.

THE SLIMMING COMPRESSION BELT WITH ZIPPERS AND POCKETS TO CARRY ALL OF YOUR VALUABLES SECURELY



SURGERY SHOPPING LIST: *Nice to Haves*

RECOVERY ENTERTAINMENT:

This is the time to stock up on books, magazines, DVD's, apps, and Netflix downloads you enjoy. If you enjoy listening to audio books, go ahead and download some from your wishlist. Pick things that are light and fun and cheer you up. It's a perfect excuse to binge-watch episodes of nostalgic TV shows! Be careful with your favorite laugh-out-loud comedies because laughing after a tummy tuck hurts for a while.

Keep in mind that you'll probably be falling asleep in the middle of whatever you're watching or reading, so don't plan on digesting anything complicated and heavy, like *War and Peace* or *Games of Thrones*.

Definitely don't plan on working in bed for the first couple of days. Seriously. When you're taking pain medication, you may not remember very much later.



PRE-SURGERY PRIMING

(This section is mainly for women, so guys you can go on to the next page.)

Ladies, let's face it, when you are recovering from surgery, any surgery, your beauty routines are going to suffer. So it pays to be smart and get some things done right before your surgery date if you know they would otherwise bug you while you're healing.

- **Go ahead and color or highlight your hair, and get a good haircut.**

It will be a while before you can color your hair after surgery, particularly if you are having a facelift or browlift. What works best for facial surgery patients is to get your hair colored a couple of days before your surgery and get a couple of shampoos in. It will be about a month after surgery before you can color it again.



- **Give yourself a pedicure.** You might not want to be staring at raggedy toenails on your bed for a week. If you want a manicure, pick out a pretty pale nail polish color so that the light will reflect through the pulse oximeter during your surgery.

- **Shave or wax now because it's hard to do when you are uncomfortable.**

If you are having breast surgery, go ahead and schedule an under-arm wax with our aesthetician Christy Ledford. You will so thank us later.



PREPARE YOUR NEST

There are many little things you can do now to make your home more recovery-friendly. It's kind of like child-proofing your house only you get to reap the benefits! All of these suggestions are from our previous patients, so hopefully you'll find some good ideas for your "nest". You may not need all of these ideas immediately after surgery, but when you are on your own after your caregiver leaves, you'll be glad to have them. Thank you to our special patients who gave us these ideas to share. You know who you are :)

- **Move a table next to your bed** (or recliner) and put all the things you think you may need on it: remote control, iPad, cell phone, chargers, magazines, books, drinks, flex straws, light snacks, chapstick, moisturizing wipes, Colgate wisps, pony-tail holders or a head scarf and a notepad and pen to write down questions as they come up. You should also keep this guide and your pre-op booklet handy.
- **Be sure you've picked up all of your prescription medications** and keep them together, along with your surgical vitamins and probiotics, on your bedside table.
- **Make sure all of your important phone numbers are programmed into your phone. Especially our number, (865) 450-9253**, your caregiver's and the phone numbers of people who cheer you up.





PREPARE YOUR NEST (continued)

- **Have lots of pillows and throw blankets near your bed.**

If you have a rocking chair, bring it close to where you'll be hanging out

- **Put the recovery clothes that you're going to want** to have easy access to in the front part of your closet and your top dresser drawers so you won't have to bend over to get anything. Loose elastic pants and even yoga pants are comfy after surgery. You'll be wanting loose button up shirts and PJ tops so you don't have to pull things over your head. Don't wear anything super-nice because the bacitracin ointment tends to get on your clothes and you are more likely to spill drinks on yourself while taking pain medication. Just sayin.

- **Have some cash handy** so your caregiver can run out and pick up things at the store as needed. You might want to make sure your car has a full tank of gas so your caregiver doesn't have to mess with that while running errands for you.

- **Organize all the items in the fridge** you think you'll need on the top shelf or the shelf that you can access most easily. The same goes for the freezer section because you don't want to fight to lift things. If you use milk, buy half gallons, rather than full gallons. Same goes for other drinks you like; get the smaller size for now.

- **Put paper plates, cups and bowls on your counter along with plastic silverware.** It's light and it won't be a big deal if you drop it. Also you won't have to wash anything. Nice, huh? Consider even leaving the pots you use out on the burners; so much easier than bending over to get them.

- **Same thing with your bathroom.** Put everything you'll be using on the bathroom counter: deodorant, toothbrush and toothpaste etc. Also make sure you're stocked with toilet paper and tampons if you think you'll need them.

- **A little "pampering".** Some patients mentioned they used Charmin wipes because you can't reach as well to wipe, and kept a spare pair of underwear and a spare tube of bacitracin ointment within reach of the toilet. Something to consider because especially for body patients, removing compression garments and going to the bathroom can be a bit of a project at first.

- **If you have drains,** put the little measuring cups we gave you in your surgical kit next to your bathroom sink.

IT'S GETTING CLOSE: THE DAY BEFORE SURGERY

- **Eat healthy and drink lots of fluids today**, and by lots of fluids, we don't mean alcoholic beverages.
- **You'll be getting a pre-anesthesia call** from the surgery center today if you haven't heard from them already.
- **Remove dark-colored nail polish on your fingernails.** Light colored nail polish with no decals or designs is fine. Shellac and artificial nails are fine as long as the polish is light. The pulse oximeter needs to be able to shine through it. Your toes are fine.
- **Confirm your arrival time and your route to and from the surgery center with your caregiver who is driving you.** Remember, we don't perform surgery in our office so you'll be going to the Physicians Surgery Center on Fort Sanders Campus.
- **Take off all of your jewelry and remove all piercings now** so you don't forget in the morning. And we mean ALL piercings
- **Shower using the antiseptic soap that was provided to you.**
- **Do not eat or drink anything after midnight tonight!** Anything more than a small amount of water to brush your teeth or take your medication is a big no-no and could be unsafe during your surgery. This includes candy, gum and mints. There is no wiggle-room here. We don't want to have to cancel your surgery, so please don't do it.

TIME TO PACK YOUR BAG!

Most of you will not be staying overnight in the hospital, but there are some things you will need to bring with you to the surgery center.

These include:

- Your driver's license and insurance card (if you have one)
- Eye glasses and an eyeglass case because you won't be wearing contacts

Have these in the car for the ride home:

- Crackers to eat if you have some nausea
- Pillow and throw blanket to make you more comfortable. Hugging the pillow against your stomach will make you feel more secure if you've had a tummy tuck or body lift.



RELAX, GO TO BED EARLY AND TRY NOT TO STRESS. OH. AND PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO SET YOUR ALARM CLOCK;)



DAY OF SURGERY: A CHECKLIST

TODAY'S YOUR BIG DAY

- You haven't eaten or drank anything since midnight last night. Check.
- You showered and washed your body with antiseptic soap last night and this morning. Check.
- You haven't put on any deodorant, makeup, perfume, hair spray or panty hose. Check.
- You didn't take any of your surgery vitamins or Bromelain. Wait until after your surgery to resume those. Check.
- You know where you're going and you have someone to drive you, pick you up and stay with you for at least 24 hours after surgery. Check.
- You're giving yourself plenty of time to get to the surgery center on time. Check
- You're wearing loose fitting clothing with a loose shirt that buttons up the front and tennis shoes or some other shoes easy to walk in. No Jimmy Choo's. Check.
- You're not wearing any contact lenses, jewelry or have dark fingernail polish or any piercings anywhere on your body. Check.
- You have your ID, insurance card, eye glasses and glasses case on you and the crackers, pillow and throw blankets are in the car. Check.
- You're taking a car that's easy to get in and out of and you're not riding home with someone who drives like Ricky Bobby from *Tallegda Nights*, right?

OK. IT'S TIME TO HEAD TO THE SURGERY CENTER.

WARNING SIGNS AFTER SURGERY THAT REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE:

- Chest pain.
- Trouble Breathing.
- Loss of consciousness.
- Calf pain or swelling.
- Any other medical emergency.

CALL OUR OFFICE IMMEDIATELY AT 865-450-9253 IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- A high fever, (over 101), severe nausea and vomiting, continued dizziness or incoherent behavior such as hallucinations.
- Any pain that cannot 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.
- One side of the neck that is larger than the other if you've had a facelift.
- Inability to urinate.
- A suspected reaction to one of your medications.

**IF IT IS AFTER HOURS, GO AHEAD AND CALL
TO SPEAK WITH THE PHYSICIAN ON-CALL
FOR INSTRUCTIONS.**

Only rely on the advice of your own doctor who is familiar with your medical history and care. Always call your doctor's office with specific medical questions.



RECOMMENDATIONS **FOLLOWING SURGERY—** **SHARE THIS WITH YOUR CAREGIVER**



REST, but don't just stay in bed. Even though you won't feel like it it's important that you are ambulatory, meaning walking under your own strength, with your caregiver next to you if you need help or feel woozy. Get up at least every 2-3 hours, walk around a bit and use the restroom.

ELEVATE YOUR HEAD AND CHEST. That's 2-3 pillows behind your back. If you've had a tummy tuck or a body lift, you'll also want to prop up your knees with pillows or settle into a recliner.

START YOUR MEDICATIONS. Take them according to your pre-op instructions. Remember not to take your muscle-relaxant Soma (Carisprodol) for the first twenty four hours. You were given Soma only if you had an abdominoplasty with muscle repair or a breast augmentation with the implants placed underneath the muscle. If you are having trouble urinating after surgery, **DO NOT TAKE THE SOMA** and call us at the office.

DEEP BREATHE, COUGH AND STRETCH. Your lungs need to wake up after anesthesia to prevent you from accumulating fluid. So at least once an hour, take five deep cleansing breaths. Then put a pillow on your tummy and hold it close to you. Cough three times. If you've had a breast augmentation, do the stretches we taught you on the way to the bathroom, every 2-3 hours.

Only rely on the advice of your own doctor who is familiar with your medical history and care. Always call your doctor's office with specific medical questions.



RECOMMENDATIONS **FOLLOWING SURGERY** (continued)

DRINK. DRINK. DRINK. Fluids are critical after surgery. Drink at least 8 ounces every two hours of non-carbonated, non-caffeinated and non-alcoholic beverages like water and Gatorade. You should have to pee every couple of hours. If you don't, you're not drinking enough.

START YOUR THERAPEUTIC ICE PACKS. Place your ice packs now. You'll want to have them twenty minutes on and twenty minutes off while you're awake, so have your caregiver put them back in the freezer after they defrost.

EAT SOMETHING LIGHT. You'll want to ease back into eating. Start with "comfort" foods like jello, soup, crackers and toast until you feel up to more substantial meals. It may take you a couple of days.

AVOID SALT. Eating salty foods increases swelling during your recovery. Try to stay away from it.

WEAR YOUR POST-SURGERY GARMENTS AFTER BREAST SURGERY. You'll be wearing your surgical bra around the clock except while bathing. If you don't like the surgical bra we give you, you may wear any bra with good support and no underwire.

DON'T SMOKE OR VAPE. If ever there was a time not to smoke, this is it. Smoking will greatly impair your ability to heal after surgery. Don't do it. And no second-hand smoke either.




RELAX. **REMEMBER, YOU JUST HAD SURGERY!**

Don't do anything stressful.
Just let your caregiver take care of you.
Don't lift anything heavier
than a paperback book.

YES. This Means YOU!





ABOUT SHOWER CHAIRS. You are going to need help taking a shower--another reason to choose your caregiver wisely;). If you have a seat built into your shower, you're in business.

If not, shower chairs are available on Amazon starting at **\$40** and may be a good investment if you are having a tummy tuck or a body lift. Another route you can go is to use a plastic outdoor chair or even a folding chair covered a large garbage bag to prevent it from getting wet. Not super-glamorous, but it works.

SHOWERING AFTER SURGERY

You can shower the day after your surgery if you feel up to it. (Facelift patients, you will wait until after your post-op appointment the day after surgery when your bandages and drains come out.)

You'll need some help from your caregiver in case you get dizzy in the shower. Go slow and sit down if you start getting woozy.

BREAST LIFT PATIENTS ONLY: Dr. Reath uses a special tape on your incision. Do NOT remove the tape. It will come off on its own about two weeks after surgery. Because you have the tape, you won't need antibiotic ointment under your dressing.

If you haven't had a breast lift, go ahead and take everything off down to the skin and stitches. This includes all the dressings covering your incisions, but not your drains if you have them, because they are sewn in.

Shower, gently using soap on your incision sites and around your stitches. You may wash your hair. If you still have antiseptic soap, you can use it for a day or two and then return to your regular soap. If you don't, no worries.

After you get out of the shower, gently dry off. Apply antibiotic ointment (Bacitracin) to your incision sites and cover them with the non-adhering dressings, panty liners or cotton maxi pads depending on your procedure. Use a bit of tape to hold in place if you want. Then put your surgical bra or camisole on, then the binder or compression garment and the rest of your loose-fitting comfy clothes. Done!

Repeat tomorrow :)

THE EMOTIONAL ROLLER COASTER

Please share this with your caregiver.

Ready or not, your emotions may feel out of control while you are recovering from surgery. Over this hill might be a gentle kiddy ride or a full-fledged Dollywood “Wild Eagle” coaster. It’s just easier on you and your caregiver if you expect things to be a little rocky. That way, if you steel yourself for the loop de loop and just have a few speed bumps, you’re in for a nice surprise.

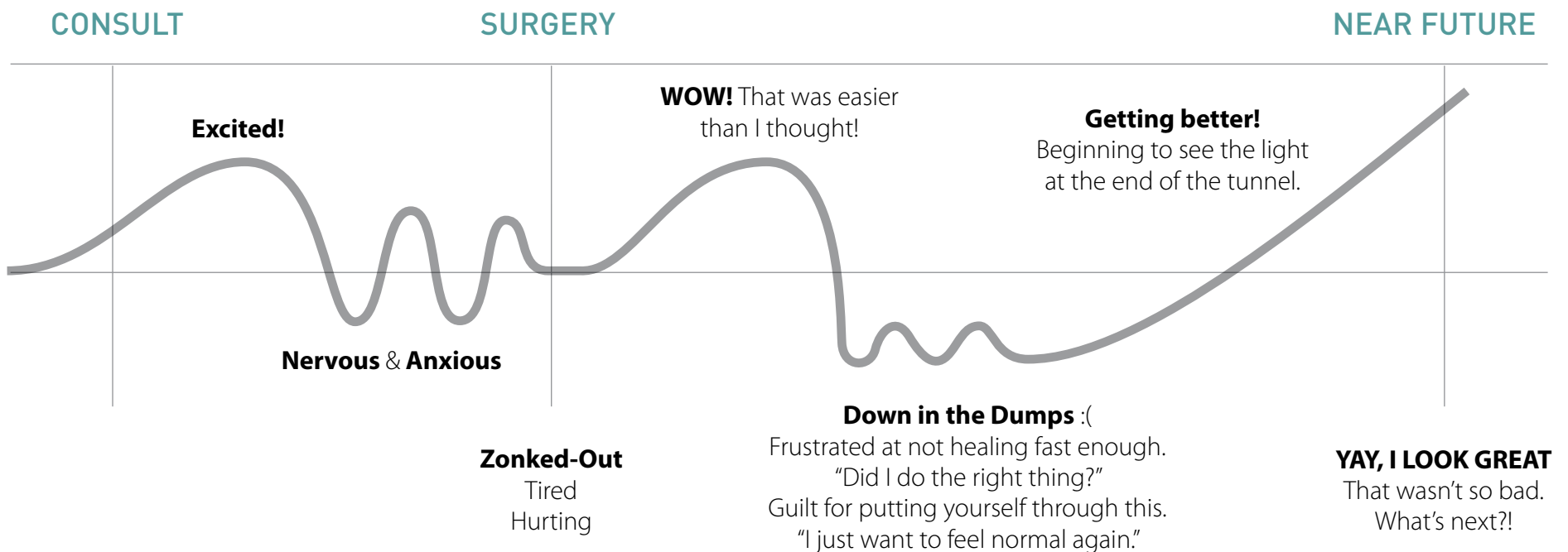
Surgery affects each person’s emotions differently. The most common reaction is to be excited but uncomfortable for the first few days. Then out of nowhere you’re down in the dumps because you’re not feeling the way you want. It usually happens around day 3 to day 5 after your surgery. It’s when you might start asking yourself if you made the right decision or feeling stupid for doing this to yourself. Even if you are normally on a very even emotional keel, you could find yourself crying for no reason. This is so normal.

Procedures with longer recovery times like tummy tucks and body lifts tend to have more emotionally rocky recovery times. You may even wear out your caregiver. Things do get better and soon you’ll see the light at the end of the tunnel. Don’t ask yourself if you’ve made the right decision for at least 4 weeks.



THE EMOTIONAL ROLLER COASTER

A graph of what you'll feel during this process could look like this:





SWELLING AFTER SURGERY

One of the most common patient complaints, particularly with tummy tuck or body lift procedures, is that they are “puffy” after their procedure. It’s a natural concern. After all, you’ve waited so long to see this new flat tummy and you just know it’s there underneath all that swelling.

As Dr. Reath says, “swelling has a mind of its own” and the best treatment for swelling is patience. OK. We know that’s not what you want to hear, so here are another couple of things that will help a little bit.

- **Avoid salty foods which increase swelling.**
- **Keep wearing your compression garments 24/7.**
- **Engage in light physical activity such as walking, as much as you can.**

One thing that you should **NOT** do is to take diuretics. Diuretics after surgery don’t help the swelling, but they do cause dehydration, which will further set you back. So even if you think it’s a good idea, it’s not.

SEX AFTER PLASTIC SURGERY: GLAD YOU ASKED

by Dr. Reath

From time to time during my post-operative consultations, a patient or their spouse will ask me when they can resume normal sexual activity. Sometimes I am asked this before surgery. And if there is any surprise in this, it would be that I am not asked this more often. However, I am always gratified when a patient, or a couple will be honest enough about their concerns to ask what might be considered by some an embarrassing question.

So, when can you resume normal sexual activities after plastic surgery? This is not a question you will find an answer to in a text book.



But, the answer in many cases would be sooner than you think. It really depends upon a couple of things: the surgery you have had, how much discomfort you are in, and when you as the patient feel ready for this.



SEX AFTER PLASTIC SURGERY (continued)

Few people will be ready for sexual activity the day after surgery. And if there are drains involved, or special positioning after surgery is indicated, this probably is not the right time for physical romance. The time you will need to wait will be longer for more involved operations. For instance, you may want to wait several weeks after a tummy tuck, but probably not as long after breast enlargement. In fact, women who have had breast enlargement may feel much better about themselves in bed and want to get back into the saddle sooner.

Pain can be a real turn off. If you're hurting, or needing narcotic pain medication, making love to your partner may not feel too good. And, after all, you want to enjoy your sexual activity. So, wait until you're not hurting. In many cases you may need to be somewhat inventive with positioning to enjoy sex. Having someone's body weight on an area that is healing may be uncomfortable. But, if you can position yourselves to prevent this, all systems may be go.

Perhaps the most important consideration is when you, as the patient, feel ready for sex. You are the only one who can determine this. At times this may call for patience. At other times, you may find physical closeness (even if it does not involve sex) is comforting and

something that really makes you feel better. On the other hand if you are completely healed, and you are in doubt about how you feel about yourself due to scars, or changes in your body, be honest with your partner and work through this together. Understanding and reassurances can go a long way here. And once you have taken the plunge—so to speak, you may feel much better about some of these concerns.

There is no right or wrong answer to the question of when to resume sexual activity after plastic surgery. Many people are thrilled with the appearance of their body and want to get back at it pronto. Others take longer to feel ready. But common sense will often rule the day: if it doesn't feel good, don't do it. The most important thing to remember is that you can always ask your plastic surgeon. He or she probably enjoys sex as much as you do, and will be very understanding of your concerns. Like I said, I welcome this question, because it shows me how honest and healthy my patient is.



SCARS HAPPEN

Any patient who wants plastic surgery weighs the benefits of the result they want to achieve against the inevitability of having a new scar. That's because there is no such thing as scarless plastic surgery, despite all the misinformation out there. Whenever a physician makes an incision, there will be a scar.

The key is placing the scar where it will be less noticeable once it's healed, because there are areas of the body that do provide a natural camouflage. For example, Dr. Reath will make his incisions as tiny as possible: in the natural crease of the breast, behind the ears, in the hairline or on the belly where it will be covered by a bikini bottom.

The best thing for scars is, you guessed it...time. They will continue to heal and improve for at least a year or two.

Don't waste your money buying expensive scar creams. In fact, the only other thing besides time that really improves the appearance of scars is pressure. If you've had a C-section, you can probably attest to this. Don't the areas where the elastic from your underwear cross the scar look much better than the rest of the incision?

That's the reason we include the silicone strips in your recovery kit if you've had breast surgery, a tummy tuck or body lift. The silicone strips put constant pressure on your incision site which really does help improve the way your scar will look. Silicone strips are not greasy and won't stick to your clothes or stain anything. They are not cheap, so go ahead and get good use out of them. Here's how:

Start using the silicone strips 2-3 weeks after your surgery **and not before**. The incision area needs to be healed with no scabs or open areas left. Wear the strips as often as you can day and night. If you need more, we sell them in our store.

- **Breast Augmentation Silicone Strips (set of 4) \$45**
- **Breast Lift Lollipop Shapes \$60**
- **Tummy Tuck Strips \$65**

P.S. Don't wear them while showering or sweating to avoid skin irritation.

THAT'S ABOUT IT

We hope that you've enjoyed reading our Plastic Surgery Planner, and that it's been helpful in your recovery from surgery. Please feel free to forward it to anyone you know having plastic surgery.

We welcome your suggestions! Shoot us an email at **Lisa@plasticsurgeryknoxville.com**. Please let us know what you liked and if you have any other suggestions that would be helpful for future patients to know.



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