

Elevate Plastic Surgery

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Abdominoplasty (Tummy Tuck) Information

The intent of this document is to provide you with important information about your proposed surgery, its risks and possible complications. Please read this carefully to prepare for your procedure and recovery.

General Information & Candidacy

Tummy tuck surgery, also known as abdominoplasty, is a surgical procedure to remove excess skin and fatty tissue from the middle and lower abdomen and to tighten muscles of the abdominal wall. A flat and well-toned abdomen is something many of us strive for through exercise and weight control. Sometimes these methods cannot achieve our goals. Even individuals of otherwise normal body weight and proportion can develop an abdomen that protrudes or is loose and sagging due to aging, genetics, pregnancy, prior surgery, or significant fluctuations in weight.

At our clinic, we are rooted in evidence-based holistic care and prioritize women's health and wellness. As a part of our commitment to your safety and optimal surgical outcomes, we advise that individuals who intend to lose weight maintain a stable weight before undergoing body contouring surgery, rather than adhering to a strict weight cutoff. Abdominoplasty is not a surgical treatment for being overweight, nor is it a substitute for an appropriate exercise program.

Although the results of a tummy tuck are technically permanent, the positive outcome can be affected by significant fluctuations in your weight. For this reason, women who may be considering future pregnancies would be advised to postpone a tummy tuck. A tummy tuck cannot correct stretch marks, although these may be removed or somewhat improved if they are located on the areas of excess skin that will be excised.

You may be a good candidate if you:

- Are physically healthy and at a stable weight.
- Have realistic expectations.
- Are a nonsmoker.
- Are bothered by the appearance of your abdomen.

Alternative Treatments

Alternative forms of management consist of not treating the areas of loose skin and fatty deposits. Suction-assisted lipectomy (liposuction) may be a surgical alternative to abdominoplasty if there are good skin tone and localized abdominal fatty deposits in an individual of normal weight. Diet and exercise programs may be of benefit in the overall reduction of excess body fat.

Pre-Operative Preparation

In preparing for tummy tuck surgery, you may be asked to:

- Get lab testing, imaging, or a medical evaluation.
- Take certain medications or adjust your current medications.
- Stop smoking.
- Do not take any aspirin or anti-inflammatory medications for 2 weeks before surgery, as this may increase the risk of bleeding.

If your tummy tuck is performed on an outpatient basis, be sure to arrange for someone to drive you to and from surgery and to stay with you for at least the first night following surgery.

The Procedure

1. **Anesthesia:** Medications are administered for your comfort during the surgical procedures. This procedure is done under general anesthesia.
2. **The Incision:** A full tummy tuck requires a horizontally-oriented incision in the area between the pubic hairline and belly button. Once the abdominal skin is lifted, the underlying weakened abdominal muscles may be repaired. A second incision around the navel may be necessary to remove excess skin in the upper abdomen. The upper abdominal skin is pulled down, excess skin is trimmed, remaining skin is sutured, and a new opening for the belly button is created.
3. **Closing the Incisions:** Sutures, skin adhesives, tapes, or clips close the skin incisions. Most surgical techniques use deep sutures.
4. **Results:** Your tummy tuck will result in a flatter, firmer abdominal contour that is more proportionate with your body type and weight. Noticeable results may be appreciated 3-6 months after surgery once all the swelling subsides.

Post-Operative Care & Expected Results

During your tummy tuck recovery, dressings or bandages may be applied to your incisions, and you may be wrapped in an elastic bandage or a compression garment to minimize swelling and support your abdomen. Small, thin tubes may be temporarily placed under the skin to drain any excess blood or fluid.

You will be given specific instructions on how to care for the surgical site and drains (if used), medications to apply or take orally, and when to follow up with your surgeon. It is important that the surgical incisions are not subjected to excessive force, swelling, abrasion, or motion during healing.

The final results may be initially obscured by swelling and an inability to stand fully upright. The scar may take several months to a year to fade. In women who have undergone a cesarean section, the existing scars may be incorporated into the new scar.

Risks & Safety Considerations

Every surgical procedure involves a certain amount of risk, and your choice to undergo surgery is based on comparing the risks to potential benefits. Risks include:

- Bleeding, which may require emergency treatment; do not take aspirin for 10-14 days prior to surgery.
- Infection, which is unusual but may require antibiotics or additional surgery.
- Fluid accumulations (seroma) infrequently occur between the skin and the abdominal wall.

- Diminished or loss of skin sensation, particularly in the lower abdominal area, which may not totally resolve.
- Skin contour irregularities, depressions, and residual skin irregularities at the ends of incisions ("dog ears").
- Excessive or abnormal scarring that may be unattractive and differently colored than surrounding skin.
- Sutures may spontaneously poke through the skin and produce irritation.
- Fatty tissue found deep in the skin might die (fat necrosis), producing areas of firmness.
- Wound disruption or delayed healing, where some areas of skin may die; smokers have a greater risk of skin loss and wound healing complications.
- Malposition, scarring, unacceptable appearance, or loss of the umbilicus (navel).
- Blood clots in the leg (DVT) or lung (pulmonary emboli), which can be life-threatening.
- Chronic pain if nerves become trapped in scar tissue (uncommon).
- Allergic reactions to tape, suture material, blood products, or topical preparations.
- Unsatisfactory results or normal asymmetry in body features; patients seeking elective surgery must have realistic expectations focusing on improvement rather than perfection.

Financial Responsibilities & Disclaimer

The cost of surgery involves charges for your surgeon, surgical supplies, anesthesia, and facility charges. The fees do not include potential future costs for additional procedures to revise or complete your outcome. There is a non-refundable fee for booking and scheduling this surgery.

Informed-consent documents are used to communicate information about the proposed surgical treatment and disclose risks and alternative forms of treatment, including no surgery. These documents should not be considered all-inclusive. Please ensure you read this carefully and have all questions answered before signing consent.