

# Abdominoplasty/Tummy Tuck

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**Purpose:** To remove excess fat and skin from the lower and middle abdomen and from around the waist area, and in most cases restore weakened and separated muscles creating an abdominal profile that is smoother and firmer.

**Procedure:**

**Anesthetic:** general anesthetic

**Duration of the procedure.:** 2-3 hours

**Hospital stay:** 2 days

**Stitch removal :** 2 weeks after surgery or absorbable stitches

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There are two types of tummy tuck: partial and full. The operation will usually take place under a general anaesthetic. The length of the operation will depend on the extent of the surgery, but it could take up to three hours. In a partial tummy tuck, the surgeon makes a large incision across the lower abdomen. He or she then separates the skin from the abdominal wall, removes excess fat and cuts away the excess skin. The remaining skin is then pulled down and stitched together at the line of the first incision. For a full tummy tuck, the surgeon makes an incision across the lower abdomen, just above the pubic area, from hip bone to hip bone. The surgeon makes a second incision to free the belly button from the tissue that surrounds it and separates the skin from the abdominal wall. He or she then pulls down the muscles and stitches them into their new position, removes fat deposits and cuts away the excess skin. A new hole is then cut for the belly button, and it is stitched back into place. Finally, the surgeon pulls the remaining skin down and stitches it together at the line of the first incision. After surgery you should expect to spend 1 to 2 days in the hospital.

Initially you will be on bed rest but as soon as you are able, you will be encouraged to get out of bed to walk. You will notice that at first it will be hard to stand up straight. Early walking helps the muscles heal and makes it less likely that any blood clots will form in your legs. Once you are stable you can be transferred to your accommodation. You should have someone to drive you and to stay with you for the first few days. Your drains may be removed before discharge or you may leave the clinic with them still in place. You will be limited to sponge baths until the drains and dressings are removed. After that you may take showers but no baths for 2 weeks. You may continue to have a significant amount of pain for 1 to 2 weeks and maybe prescribed medication by your surgeon. Skin sutures are removed at about 10 to 14 days if these were not absorbables. You can eat whatever you want but you may need to take laxatives for 1 to 2 weeks. The combination of the pain pills and sore abdominal muscles may cause you may have constipation. Continue your walking at home. Your surgeon may recommend some non-strenuous exercises. Although mild exercise is important for your recovery, you should avoid any vigorous activity for 6 weeks. Elastic stockings and/or an elastic binding worn around the abdomen may be recommended for a few weeks after surgery. Most patients can return to work within 2 weeks. If your job is physically demanding you should wait 4 to 6 weeks. Your scars may remain raised and/or discolored for up to 9 months.

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**Results:** Your tummy tuck will result in a flatter, firmer abdominal contour that is more proportionate with your body type and weight.

**Risks of Tummy Tuck Surgery:** As with any surgery, there are risks to consider. Tummy tuck plastic surgery involves a very essential part of your body. Although the majority of patients do not experience the following complications, you should understand all possible consequences of tummy tuck plastic surgery:

\* Bleeding &ndash; It is possible, though unusual, to experience a bleeding episode during or after tummy tuck surgery. Do not take medications for 14 days before tummy tuck surgery, as this may increase the risk of bleeding during or after surgery.

- \* Infection &ndash; Infection is unusual after tummy tuck surgery.
  
  - \* Change in skin sensation &ndash; Diminished (or loss of) skin sensation in the lower abdominal area may not totally resolve after tummy tuck.
  
  - \* Skin contour irregularities &ndash; Contour irregularities and depressions may occur after tummy tuck. Visible and palpable wrinkling of skin can occur.
  
  - \* Skin scarring &ndash; Excessive scarring is uncommon after tummy tuck but in rare cases abnormal scars may occur.
  
  - \* Surgical anesthesia &ndash; Both local and general anesthesia involve risks. There is the possibility of complications, injury, and even death from all forms of surgical anesthesia or sedation.
  
  - \* Asymmetry &ndash; Symmetrical body appearance may not result from tummy tuck. Factors such as skin tone, fatty deposits, bony prominence, and muscle tone may contribute to normal asymmetry in body features. The belly button may be off the midline of the abdomen.
  
  - \* Delayed healing &ndash; Wound disruption or delayed wound healing is possible after tummy tuck plastic surgery. Some areas of the abdomen may not heal normally and may take a long time to heal, some areas of skin may die. The belly button may not completely survive, especially with previous history of laparoscopic procedures. Smokers have a greater risk of skin loss and wound healing complications.
  
  - \* Allergic reactions &ndash; In rare cases, local allergies to tape, suture material, or topical preparations have been reported. Systemic reactions which are more serious may occur to drugs used during tummy tuck surgery and prescription medicines.
  
  - \* Pulmonary complications &ndash; Pulmonary complications may occur secondarily to both blood clots or fat particles (pulmonary emboli) or partial collapse of the lungs after tummy tuck surgery. Should either of these complications occur, you may require hospitalization and additional treatment. Pulmonary emboli can be life-threatening or fatal in some circumstances.
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- \* Seroma &ndash; Fluid accumulations infrequently occur in between the skin and the abdominal wall after tummy tuck.
  
  - \* Umbilicus (belly button) &ndash; Malposition, scarring, unacceptable appearance or loss of the umbilicus (navel) may occur after tummy tuck.
  
  - \* Long term effects &ndash; Subsequent alterations in body contour may occur as the result of aging, weight loss or gain, pregnancy, or other circumstances not related to tummy tuck.
  
  - \* Pain &ndash; Chronic pain may occur very infrequently from nerves becoming trapped in scar tissue after abdominoplasty (tummy tuck).
  
  - \* Other &ndash; You may be disappointed with the results of abdominoplasty (tummy tuck) surgery. Rarely, it is necessary to perform additional surgery to improve your results.

You will be given specific instructions that may include:

How to care for the surgical site and drains, medications to apply or take orally to aid healing and reduce the potential for infection, specific concerns to look for at the surgical site or in your general health, and when to follow up with your plastic surgeon.

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