



Abdominoplasty / Tummy Tuck

What is Abdominoplasty / Tummy tuck?

Abdominoplasty is the surgical term for the operation carried out to eliminate excess skin and fat from the mid to lower abdominal region. The tummy muscles can also be tightened at the same time if necessary.

This excess tissue is often the result of childbearing, or of obesity followed by considerable weight loss, both of which cause stretching or sagging of all the abdominal structures.

Diet and exercise alone cannot provide correction since the deformity stems primarily from structural change.

Many surgeons may also suggest liposuction in conjunction with the standard "tummy tuck" procedure in appropriate cases to achieve the desired result. Please note that this is not a procedure designed to remove weight from the obese patient; there is usually little weight loss as a result of the operation.

How Abdominoplasty is performed?

The procedure recontours the body and alters the patient's abdominal shape improving the profile or silhouette. The procedure can also help to remove stretch marks and scars from the lower part of the abdomen, but a new scar will result. Obviously, as aesthetics is the goal, the scar will be in your natural crease line as much as possible.

The patient is admitted the morning of surgery. A general anaesthetic is used. In some cases the fat is sucked away from the abdomen first using Liposuction techniques. A long horizontal incision is made in the lower abdomen below the so-called 'bikini line'. The abdominal skin and fatty tissue are raised off the muscle of the abdomen as far upwards as the rib cage. The umbilicus (navel) is freed from its attachments to the abdominal skin and fat. The muscle layers are then tightened if they have been stretched.

The skin and fat layer are stretched in a downward direction and are trimmed to remove the excess with a suture line closure within the above mentioned bikini line, leaving the tummy as smooth as is possible. The umbilicus is then re-implanted so that it lies in its usual position once more.



Recovery

Postoperative instructions will be given by the surgeon, but generally speaking most patients will feel well enough to get out of bed the day of the operation. A two nights' stay in the hospital is sometimes required, after which the patient can return home to convalesce. The healing wound and dressing must be kept clean and dry until the first post operative visit. Stitch removal is usually seven to fourteen days after your surgery. Often patients can return to work after the fourteen days, but strenuous exercise and lifting must be avoided for at least six weeks. A good healthy diet low in fat and plenty of gentle exercise is encouraged.

Finally, abdominal lipectomy causes a permanent improvement to the shape of the tummy. Patients are able to fit into clothes that they could not wear previously feeling more confident with themselves.

Risks and possible complications

Generally speaking, Abdominoplasty carries the same risks as any other major surgical operation. However, since the patient is usually in good health beforehand, the dangers are significantly lessened and it is true to say, that problems are rare.

Possible complications are best fully discussed with your consulting surgeon in private consultation, but, some problems specific to Abdominoplasty include:

- **Loss of the navel:** The blood supply to the navel is inadequate after re-implantation; further surgery may be required to fashion a new navel.
- **Mal-position of the navel:** Further surgery may be required to move the navel to a better position.
- **Abdominal asymmetry:** When more tissue has been removed from one side than the other, further surgery can correct the difference.
- **Loss of sensation:** In an area above the long horizontal scar, loss of sensation is likely to occur, which results from the unavoidable damage to the sensory nerves that supply the area. These nerves regenerate slowly and after several months, sensation usually returns to normal.

All of these are possible complications, but are rare and unlikely to occur.

This leaflet has been prepared to give a basic understanding of the procedure before a consultation takes place, and to cover many of the questions frequently asked about this type of cosmetic surgery. Final decisions should not be made until an individual assessment has taken place with the surgeon. There is no obligation on the part of the patient to undergo surgery by attending for consultation. If you have any further questions or would like to arrange a consultation please do not hesitate to call us.