

Abdominoplasty (Tummy Tuck)

What is Abdominoplasty?

Abdominoplasty is designed to firm and smooth the appearance of the abdomen. The procedure removes excess skin and fat and may also tighten the muscles of the abdominal wall.

How is it done?

Abdominoplasty generally takes up to four hours. The operation involves the use of a general anesthesia and a hospital stay of two to four days. An ellipse of skin between the pubic bone and the navel is cut out and the skin is lifted. Once the excess skin is removed, the skin above the navel is pulled down and stretched toward the skin below the pubic bone and is stitched together. Excess fat may be removed and underlying muscles tightened at the same time. In some cases the skin is pulled down over the original navel and a new hole is made for it to come through. After surgery, bandages and drainage tubes are put in place to support proper healing.

Why is it done?

Excess fat or skin on the abdomen and lax abdominal muscles can occur after dramatic weight loss or pregnancy. In cases where the problem does not respond to dieting or exercise, the only way to resolve the problem is surgical removal of excess skin.

Risks & complications

Complications are infrequent and usually minor. However, as with any surgery, there are risks.

- General complications of surgery include blood loss and possible transfusion, blood clots in the legs (Deep Vein Thrombosis or DVT) and chest (Pulmonary Embolism), chest infection and reactions to anesthesia.
- Poor healing which results in conspicuous scars may necessitate a second operation.
- Tissue loss along portions of the incision and infection which require antibiotic and in some cases hospitalization is possible.
- Accumulation of fluid under the skin may require additional outpatient visits.
- Patients may experience numbness after surgery that can occasionally be permanent.

Risks can be reduced by following the surgeon's instructions before and after surgery.

Alternatives

The surgeon may discuss alternative approaches to the Abdominoplasty procedure. Liposuction may be used alone to remove excess abdominal fat. However, the main alternative to Abdominoplasty is simply to leave the abdomen as is.

Candidate eligibility

The best candidates for Abdominoplasty are men and women who are in relatively good shape, but bothered by excess deposits of abdominal fat and skin that will not respond to diet or exercise. The surgery is particularly helpful to women who have finished bearing children, with abdominal muscles that have separated or weakened due to pregnancy. The surgeon will make the final determination of each patient's eligibility for the procedure after an examination and consultation with the patient.

Your Consultation

Your physician consultation is very important, because it is the moment when you can discuss your medical issues face-to-face with your doctor. If you are traveling from overseas, this will be the first time you meet with your doctor so it critical that he/she understands:

- Your medical needs
- Your expectations
- Your medical history

Most people have a good idea of what the procedure or outcome they want ("I want smaller breasts"), and the physician's responsibility is to listen and then explain what can be done, the procedures or techniques to achieve your objectives, and the risks and costs involved.

You will have a lot of questions to ask, so preparation is key to make the most of your consultation. We suggest that you:

- Write your questions down to make sure you remember them
- Come with your medical history/survey already completed
- Bring any photos or visuals aids that will help explain what it is you want or expect from treatment

Please note that this information should be used only as a guide to your treatment. All specifics will be discussed with your Physician at your consultation.