

# Tummy Tuck

Abdominoplasty



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF  
PLASTIC SURGEONS®

# What is a Tummy Tuck?

Also known as abdominoplasty, a tummy tuck removes excess fat and skin and, in most cases, restores weakened or separated muscles creating an abdominal profile that is smoother and firmer.

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.

The most common causes of this include:

- Aging
- Heredity
- Pregnancy
- Prior surgery
- Significant fluctuations in weight

## What it won't do:

A tummy tuck is not a substitute for weight loss or an appropriate exercise program. Although the results of a tummy tuck are technically permanent, the positive outcome can be greatly diminished by significant fluctuations in your weight. For this reason, individuals who are planning substantial weight loss or women who may be considering future pregnancies would be advised to postpone a tummy tuck.

Also, 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.



# Consultation & Preparing for Surgery

The success and safety of your tummy tuck procedure depends very much on your complete candidness during your consultation. You'll be asked a number of questions about your health, desires, and lifestyle.

## Is it right for me?

Tummy tuck surgery is a highly individualized procedure and you should do it for yourself, not to fulfill someone else's desires or to try to fit any sort of ideal image. Abdominoplasty is a good option for you if:

- You are physically healthy and at a stable weight
- You have realistic expectations
- You are a non-smoker
- You are bothered by the appearance of your abdomen

## During your consultation be prepared to discuss:

- Your surgical goals
- Medical conditions, drug allergies, and medical treatments
- Current medications, vitamins, herbal supplements, alcohol, tobacco, and drug use
- Previous surgeries

## Your surgeon will also:

- Evaluate your general health status and any pre-existing health conditions or risk factors
- Take photographs
- Discuss your options and recommend a course of treatment
- Discuss the likely outcomes of the tummy tuck and any risks or potential complications



**Tummy tuck surgery may be performed in an accredited outpatient facility or in an ambulatory surgical center or a hospital. Prior to surgery, you may be asked to:**

- Have a physical examination, including lab work
- Take certain medications or adjust your current medications
- Stop smoking or vaping\*
- Avoid taking aspirin and certain anti-inflammatory drugs, as they can increase bleeding

*\*Smoking decreases blood flow, which can impede wound healing and increase the risk of infection.*

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Be sure to ask your plastic surgeon questions. It's very important to understand all aspects of your tummy tuck surgery, especially regarding your personal health history. It's natural to feel some anxiety, whether it's excitement for your anticipated new look or a bit of preoperative stress. Don't be shy about discussing these feelings with your plastic surgeon.

# The Procedure

## Step 1 - Anesthesia

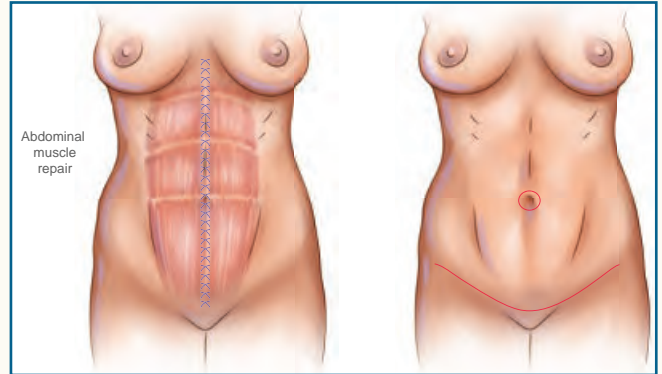
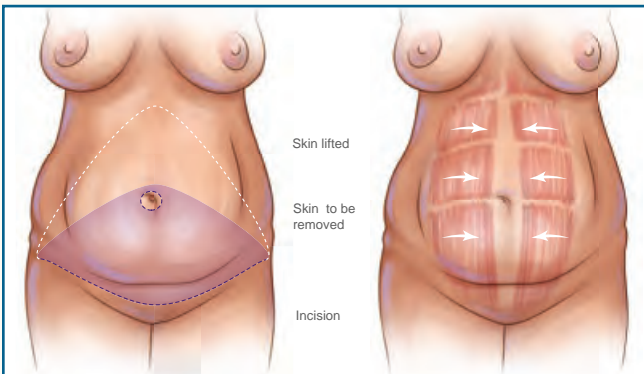
Medications are administered for your comfort during the surgical procedure. The choices include intravenous sedation and general anesthesia. Your doctor will recommend the best choice for you.

## Step 2 - The incision

A full tummy tuck requires a horizontally-oriented incision in the area between the pubic hairline and belly button. The shape and length of the incision will be determined by the amount of excess skin.

- Once the abdominal skin is lifted, the underlying weakened abdominal muscles are 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 like a window shade
- The excess skin is trimmed and the remaining skin is sutured together
- A new opening for the belly button is created. The belly button is popped through to the surface and sutured into position

When a correction is isolated to the area below the navel, a limited or “mini tummy tuck” with a shorter incision at the pubic bone level may be recommended. Liposuction may be performed with either a full or mini tummy tuck where excess fat is a factor and contouring is desired.

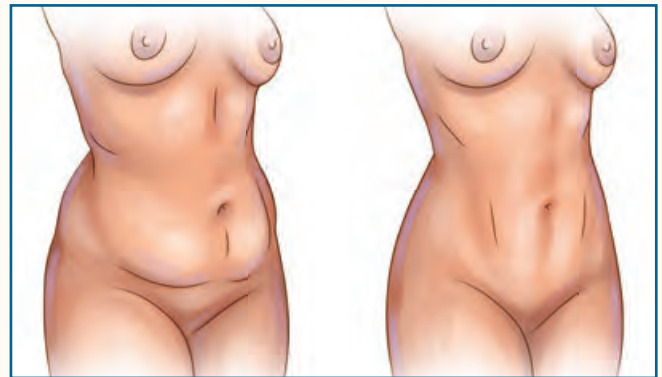


## Step 3 - Closing the incisions

Sutures, skin adhesives, tapes, or clips close the skin incisions.

## Step 4 - See the results

Your tummy tuck will result in a flatter, firmer abdominal contour that is more proportionate with your body type and weight. The final results may be initially obscured by swelling and your inability to stand fully upright until internal healing is complete. Within a week or two, you should be standing tall and confident in your new slimmer profile.



# Risks & Safety

The choice to undergo a tummy tuck is a highly personal one. You will have to decide if the operation will achieve your goals and if the risks and potential complications are acceptable. Prior to the procedure, you may be required to sign informed consent forms to confirm that you have a thorough understanding of the procedure and associated risks.

## Risks can include:

- Anesthesia risks
- Bleeding
- Infection
- Fluid accumulation (seroma)
- Poor wound healing
- Skin loss
- Numbness or other changes in skin sensation
- Skin discoloration and/or prolonged swelling
- Unfavorable scarring
- Recurrent looseness of skin
- Fatty tissue found deep in the skin might die (fat necrosis)
- Deep vein thrombosis, cardiac and pulmonary complications
- Asymmetry
- Suboptimal aesthetic result
- Possibility of revisional surgery
- Persistent pain



# Recovery & Results

Following your surgery, 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 as it heals. Small, thin tubes may be temporarily placed under the skin to drain any excess blood or fluid that may collect.

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.

**Be sure to ask your plastic surgeon specific questions about what you can expect during your individual recovery period.**

- Where will I be taken after my surgery is complete?
- What medication will I be given or prescribed after surgery?
- Will I have dressings/bandages after surgery?
- When will they be removed?
- How will I bathe?
- How long will I wear the pressure garment?
- When can I resume normal activity and exercise?
- When do I return for follow-up care?

Recovery Period	What to expect
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor pain, swelling and bruising (medication may be required)</li> <li>• Significantly limit your activity</li> </ul>
Weeks 2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You will start to feel much better</li> <li>• Return to work (depending on your job)</li> <li>• Limit exercise and activities</li> </ul>
Weeks 4-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bruising should be gone</li> <li>• Swelling should start to subside</li> </ul>
Week 6 and beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued improvement in swelling; may start to gradually increase activity and do gentle exercise</li> </ul>

The final results of your tummy tuck may be initially obscured by swelling and your inability to stand fully upright until internal healing is complete. Your tummy tuck will result in a flatter, firmer abdominal contour that is more proportionate with your body type and weight.

Previous abdominal surgery may limit the potential results of a tummy tuck. In women who have undergone cesarean section, the existing scars may be incorporated into the new scar. Scars may take several months to a year to fade as much as they will.

Although good results are expected from your procedure, there is no guarantee. In some situations, it may not be possible to achieve optimal results with a single surgical procedure and another surgery may be necessary.

Following your physician's instructions is essential to the success of your surgery. It's important that the surgical incisions are not subjected to excessive force, swelling, abrasion, or motion during the time of healing. Your doctor will give you specific instructions on how to care for yourself.

# Cost

Prices for tummy tuck procedures can vary. A surgeon's cost may be based on his or her experience, the type of procedure used, and geographic office location.

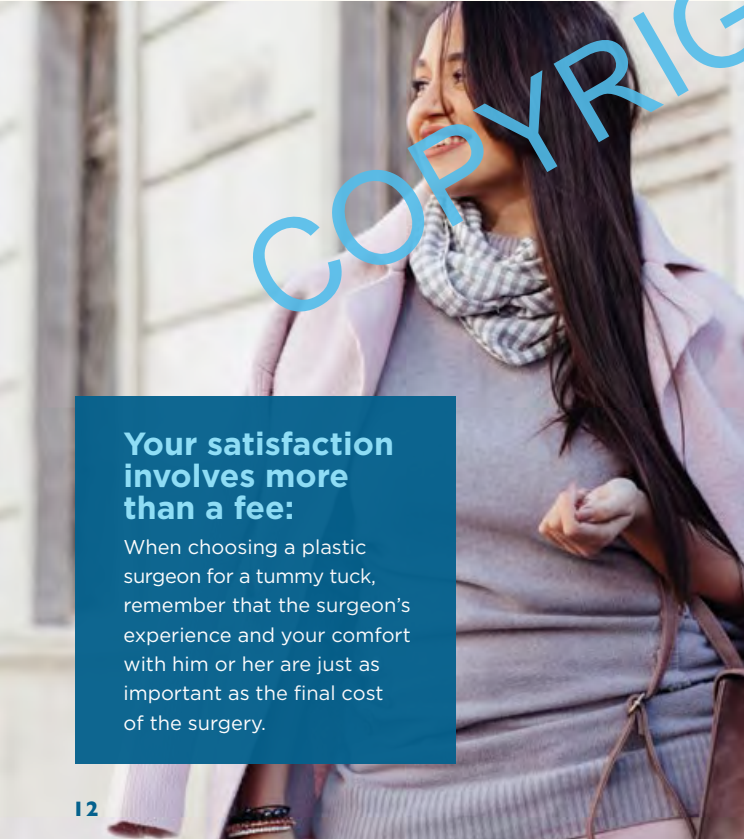
## Cost may include:

- Anesthesia fees
- Hospital or surgical facility costs
- Medical tests
- Post-surgery garments
- Prescriptions for medication
- Surgeon's fee

Most health insurance plans do not cover tummy tuck surgery, as it is considered cosmetic surgery. Please ask your surgeon for a complete picture of the costs you can expect for your procedure. Many plastic surgeons offer patient financing plans.

# Words to know

- **Abdominoplasty:** A surgical procedure to correct the apron of excess skin hanging over your abdomen.
- **General anesthesia:** Drugs and/or gases used during an operation to relieve pain and alter consciousness.
- **Hematoma:** Blood pooling beneath the skin.
- **Intravenous sedation:** Sedatives administered by injection into a vein to help you relax.
- **Liposuction:** Also called lipoplasty or suction lipectomy, this procedure vacuums out fat from beneath the skin's surface to reduce fullness.
- **Local anesthesia:** A drug is injected directly to the site of an incision during an operation to relieve pain.
- **Sutures:** Stitches used by surgeons to hold skin and tissue together.
- **Tummy tuck:** A surgical procedure to correct the apron of excess skin hanging over your abdomen.



## Your satisfaction involves more than a fee:

When choosing a plastic surgeon for a tummy tuck, remember that the surgeon's experience and your comfort with him or her are just as important as the final cost of the surgery.

# Questions to ask my plastic surgeon

- Are you certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery?
- Are you a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons?
- Were you trained specifically in the field of plastic surgery?
- How many years of plastic surgery training have you had?
- Do you have hospital privileges to perform this procedure? If so, at which hospitals?
- Is the office-based surgical facility accredited by a nationally- or state-recognized accrediting agency, or is it state-licensed or Medicare-certified?
- Am I a good candidate for this procedure?
- What will be expected of me to get the best results?
- Where and how will you perform my procedure?
- What surgical technique is recommended for me?
- How long of a recovery period can I expect, and what kind of help will I need during my recovery?
- What are the risks and complications associated with my procedure?
- How are complications handled?
- What are my options if I am dissatisfied with the outcome?
- Do you have before and-after photos I can look at for this procedure and what results are reasonable for me?

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# Make the Right Choice

Plastic surgery involves many choices. The first and most important is selecting a member of the **American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS)**.

## ASPS member surgeons meet rigorous standards:

- Board certification by the American Board of Plastic Surgery (ABPS)® or in Canada by The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada®
- Complete at least six years of surgical training following medical school with a minimum of three years of plastic surgery residency training
- Pass comprehensive oral and written exams
- Graduate from an accredited medical school
- Complete continuing medical education, including patient safety each year
- Perform surgery in accredited, state-licensed, or Medicare-certified surgical facilities

## Do not be confused by other official-sounding boards and certifications.

The ABPS is recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), which has approved medical specialty boards since 1934. There is no ABMS-recognized certifying board with “cosmetic surgery” in its name. By choosing a member of The American Society of Plastic Surgeons, you can be assured that you are choosing a qualified, highly trained plastic surgeon who is board certified by the ABPS or The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.





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