

Tummy Tuck (Abdominoplasty)

What is a tummy tuck?

A tummy tuck, otherwise known as abdominoplasty, removes excess fatty tissue and skin to create a flatter, more contoured stomach. Muscles can also be tightened to give the appearance of a more toned abdomen.

Who can benefit from a tummy tuck?

Both men and women may wish to undergo a tummy tuck to flatten the stomach and boost self-confidence. Patients tend to opt for the procedure to remove loose skin which may have stretched and lost its elasticity due to pregnancy and aging, and after severe weight loss that may result in excess, sagging skin.

Procedure

- ✓ **Full tummy tuck** - This is the standard tummy tuck procedure and is performed under general anesthetic, taking 2-3 hours. An incision is made from hip bone to hip bone, just above the bikini line. A second incision is made to remove the belly button from its surrounding tissue. The muscles are then pulled together (tightened) and stitched into the new position, and any excess fat and tissue removed. A new hole is cut for the belly button which is sewn into place before the leftover skin is pulled down to create a tighter, smoother surface. The skin is then sewn back up where the initial incision was originally made.
- ✓ **Mini tummy tuck** - A mini tummy tuck involves skin being removed underneath the belly button via an incision made along the bikini line, with the belly button left in place. Excess fat and skin is then removed and the skin pulled down and sewn up along the original incision. There is also the option of having an extended tummy tuck, but this isn't as common and results in a large scar around the abdomen and back.

Recovery period

You may need to spend two nights in hospital following the tummy tuck procedure. Drainage tubes will have been inserted to get rid of any excess fluid and bandages wrapped around the stomach area. Sutures will need to be removed around 10 days after the tummy tuck and it is important that you do not do any strenuous exercise for a few weeks. It is recommended that you take two weeks off work and continue to wear the supportive bandage for several weeks. If you experience any discomfort, you can take over-the-counter painkillers to alleviate the pain.

Risks

Risks are always a concern with any cosmetic procedure, and you should always be aware of these. Infection, poor healing of the wound, fluid build-up, numbness, visible scarring, blood clotting and damage to internal organs are risks associated with a tummy tuck.