



RESHAPE & RESTORE

Tummy Tuck (Abdominoplasty)

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Introduction

Reshape & Restore has put together this factsheet for anyone who is considering a tummy tuck (abdominoplasty). We understand that undergoing a surgical procedure is not often an easy decision, and you may have many questions.

The aim of this factsheet is to outline the details of the tummy tuck (abdominoplasty) procedure, explaining how it works, how it's carried out and what to expect from the results. Being fully informed about the potential risks and complications of surgery, can help to answer any concerns which may help you in making a clear decision.

Every patient's surgery is a unique experience and the approach we take at Reshape & Restore is tailored to suit your specific needs. It is important to understand that as the requirements of each patient differ, so does the outcome. This will depend on a number of factors and with our guidance, we can help you to understand the realistic results that can be achieved.

Why have a tummy tuck (Abdominoplasty)?

The aim of a tummy tuck (abdominoplasty) is to achieve a flatter, trimmer stomach. As you get older you may find that excess fat and excess skin can make the stomach look out of shape. This can happen for a variety of reasons, including: gaining weight, losing weight, pregnancy / childbirth and general ageing. Not only can gaining excess fat on the body become easier as a person gets older, less elasticity and stretching of the skin can cause it to become loose. If you are someone that has lost a lot of weight, the skin may not return to its original state, and hang from the stomach - which can also happen following pregnancy. Following a caesarean section, the skin on the lower abdomen can

develop a pouch of loose skin (known as an apron flap) where closing the wound has pulled the skin below the incision tight.

The consultation

The consultation is the most important part of any treatment journey. Not only does it give you the chance to meet your surgeon, it provides the opportunity to discuss what is concerning you and what you are hoping to achieve from surgery. There are a variety of factors we need to consider before recommending any procedure, including: general health, skin type, risk of bleeding, how well you're likely to heal, smoking status, alcohol consumption and medications. We also examine the appearance of your stomach (abdomen) and explain the results you are likely to achieve. We'll provide information about how the procedure is carried out, any potential risks and complications, and what to expect during the recovery period. The aim of the consultation is to give you a better understanding of what undergoing surgery involves and what it can mean for you. As there is a lot of information to absorb, we don't expect you to make a decision there and then. It is our policy at Reshape & Restore to offer a second consultation at a later date so you have had some time to think, and consider the details of the operation - including reading any information leaflets that have been provided by us. In many cases a person goes away and finds they have other questions that weren't thought of at the time, which can then be addressed at the second consultation. Only when both you and us are completely certain that undergoing surgery is the right option for you, will we make an appointment. During this session we will also take some photographs of your 'before' appearance and give you the opportunity to speak with past patients - this has proven to be very valuable for many of our patients.

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What happens during the procedure?

Not all 'tummy tuck' (abdominoplasty) procedures are carried out the same way, and Reshape & Restore will ensure the techniques they use are the most suitable for your individual concerns. During the consultation we may advise a mini tummy tuck, a classic tummy tuck or an extended tummy tuck. Whichever procedure is recommended, its aim will be to remove excess skin and fatty tissue from the abdomen.

The mini tummy tuck (partial abdominoplasty) usually concentrates on the lower stomach and is effective when addressing smaller amounts of skin and tissue. An incision is usually made low down on the stomach (in a similar place to where a caesarean scar might be). This allows for a wedge of skin to be removed before it is pulled together and tightened. The muscles may also be repositioned, and the navel takes on more of an elongated appearance. The classic tummy tuck removes a moderate amount of sagging skin and excess tissue from the stomach, as well as addressing muscles that have become splayed. An incision that runs from hip to hip and then goes around the navel is required with this technique so that a larger wedge of skin (usually from the belly button to the pubic bone) can be removed. The muscles in the lower abdomen can also be tightened, and in most cases, a new navel will need to be created. An extended tummy tuck may also be referred to as a lower body lift, and is used when significant amounts of skin and tissue needs extracting. For this procedure, a horizontal incision will run from hip to hip, which in some cases may also need to extend round the lower back. A general anaesthetic is used for a tummy tuck (abdominoplasty), and depending on which type of tummy tuck is most suitable, can take up to 2 hours. It is often the case that liposuction is also used when performing a tummy tuck (abdominoplasty) to assist in serum and muscle repair, as well as the removal of excess fat.

On the day of your surgery, you will be asked not to eat or drink anything from midnight, and you should not apply any creams, lotions or make-up to the torso. Our patients often spend one night recovering in hospital before being discharged, however, it is not unusual for someone to spend two or three nights with us. We usually advise that you have someone drive you home from the hospital and also to stay with you on your first night at home.

What can I expect after the procedure?

Before we discharge you we will ensure that any drains are removed (if possible), and that you've been provided with suitable pain relief advice and ointment to apply regularly to the wounds while they heal. It is not recommended that you use aspirin or brufen as these medications can increase bruising and the risk of postoperative bleeding. Dressings will be applied to the wounds, which we will aim to remove at your first follow-up appointment - as well as any drains that may have been left in.

Your stomach will have some degree of swelling, tenderness and bruising, immediately following the procedure. The skin may also feel tight, and you may experience some temporary numbness. These effects are expected to gradually settle over the next few weeks, and we ask that you keep the stomach dry for 1 week. At your first appointment we aim to remove any stitches, if your healing allows. You should then be able to shower, using non-perfumed products and warm water. When drying your body, it is better to pat gently using a soft towel, as rubbing will be uncomfortable and may disturb the wounds.

Having surgery can be hard on the body and it will use a lot of energy while it heals and recovers. You will benefit from taking it easy for a few weeks, only undertaking light duties and keeping activity levels low. Heavy lifting, rigorous exercise, swimming and the gym should be avoided for up to 6 weeks. You can expect to need up to 2 weeks off work, depending on your job, when you should feel more comfortable to drive and resume normal daily activities. Our aftercare programme entails a series of follow-up appointments made approximately 1 week, 6 weeks, 3 months and 6 months after surgery. Your healing, recovery and development of results will be closely monitored during this time, and we will provide you with any necessary advice to ensure the outcome is effective.

What are the risks of surgery?

People who undergo a surgical procedure are usually concerned about how much scarring will be left behind. At Reshape & Restore we use modern surgical techniques which consider where incisions are made, and where scars will form. With a tummy tuck (abdominoplasty) we make incisions low on the

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stomach so they are easy to hide under clothing.

In some cases a person is prone to developing hypertrophic scars, which can be particularly thick or raised from the skin. During our follow-up procedures we will monitor how your scars are developing and if hypertrophic scars are becoming likely, there are ways we can treat this in the future.

During the consultation we will discuss potential complications, which are always a risk when undergoing surgery. Haematoma is a condition where blood collects under the skin, and is a risk in the first few hours after the procedure. If this occurs we will need to take you back to the theatre to have it removed. Infection is fairly uncommon and careful aftercare is often the best way to prevent an infection from developing, and a course of antibiotics will help to clear it up. We mentioned temporary numbness as a possible side effect, but in some very uncommon cases this can be prolonged. It happens if the nerves are bruised and don't start to work as quickly as expected. Although it can cause some alarm, in most cases it does resolve itself in time and doesn't remain permanent.

It is important to maintain your mobility while your body is recovering. You should try to move around regularly as you may risk developing Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT), a condition where a blood clot forms in the leg. This only happens in around 1% of cases and we provide medication for you to take after the procedure to minimise the chance of this occurring.

If at any time you are concerned with your healing, or experience prolonged side effects / a burning sensation / discharge from the wounds, you are welcome to contact the Reshape & Restore team. Particular symptoms to look out for include: temperature above 38.5, pain and discomfort that is not relieved through painkillers, bleeding or discharge from the wounds and sudden swelling at the wounds.

What results can i expect?

The mini tummy tuck is often more suitable for older patients or those who have sagging skin following pregnancy. This particular tummy tuck firms and tightens the skin for a more toned looking appearance of the stomach. The Classic tummy tuck often has a more noticeable result when looking to improve the body's shape. This procedure can help to create a flatter looking

stomach, as well as becoming firmer and more toned in appearance. An Extended tummy tuck is often suitable for patients who have lost a significant amount of weight, or following bariatric surgery. This procedure often has the most life-changing results as it creates a notable change in the body's appearance. Not only does the body look slimmer with natural looking contours, patients feel more comfortable without excess skin rubbing on clothing or developing sore patches within the folds.

Disclaimer

We are unable to make any guarantees to the outcomes of your procedure as the results of cosmetic surgery differ from patient to patient. It is prudent to note that whilst potential outcomes may have been discussed, these can sometimes be modest. Beauty is entirely subjective, and therefore what is good / achievable for one person may not be good / achievable for another. We can only guide you to what we expect your outcome to be, during the consultation. It is also possible that post procedure, other areas of the body may become more noticeable such as: arms, flanks or thighs. This is more common with procedures such as breast augmentation or tummy tuck.

Surgery comes with no guarantee of happiness and cosmetic surgery should not be undertaken lightly. Before proceeding, you must be certain that you can cope both physically and mentally should any complications arise as a result of your decision to undergo a surgical procedure. For this reason we recommend that you do not hide the fact from friends or family, rather you involve them in the decision making process so you can be sure you have an adequate support network should you need it.