



tummy tuck (*abdominoplasty*)

When considering cosmetic surgery, it is important that you are fully informed on all aspects of the procedure that you are seeking.

What is tummy tuck?

There are several variations of tummy tuck:

- Mini-abdominoplasty (or apronectomy) excess skin and fat below the navel is removed. The umbilicus or navel is left intact.
- Standard abdominoplasty excess skin and fat below the navel is removed and the navel is relocated. The abdominal muscles are not tightened. A scar is left around the umbilicus.
- Extended abdominoplasty excess skin and fat around the waist and back are also removed. This results in a longer scar.
- Abdominoplasty with muscle placcation in addition to skin and fat removal, the muscles of the abdominal wall are tightened to give the abdomen a flatter and firmer appearance.

Why do patients seek tummy tuck?

To regain self-confidence and self-esteem, as well as to improve their chances of wearing clothes of their choice. Tummy tuck gets rid of excess skin, fat, stretch marks, and any scars from previous surgeries in the lower region of the abdomen.

What to think about at this stage?

It is important that, before you see the surgeon, you consider what you are trying to achieve from your surgery. In particular, you must understand that a tummy tuck is most definitely not a treatment for weight loss or obesity.

How is tummy tuck performed?

- The operation is performed under general anaesthesia.
- It takes between two to three hours depending on the type of tummy tuck.
- Most patients remain in hospital for one to two nights.
- If your work is not physical, expect to return to work within three to four weeks - again depending on the procedure.
- Expect to be back to full activity after six weeks. At consultation, the surgeon will advise you on a personalised treatment plan. This may involve body-contouring procedures, especially liposculpture to improve the final outcome.



Profile

cosmetic surgery

Following the operation

As with all surgery, you must expect to feel bruised and sore. The treated areas are likely to be swollen. You will have to wear a tight support garment for six weeks. Sutures or staples are usually removed after seven days. The most important thing to remember is that all tummy tucks are associated with noticeable scars. Most may be hidden by underwear.

As with all scars they will fade over a period of time, leaving very faint white lines after several years. However, it is important to remember that no surgical scar ever totally disappears.

Risks and complications

Cosmetic surgery is amongst the safest of medical procedures. However, all patients must understand and accept that no surgical procedure is absolutely free from risk. At consultation, your surgeon will discuss these risks with you.

However, it is important to understand that a tummy tuck is a major surgical procedure, with all that this implies. In particular, the scar may take a long time to settle in some skin types.

How long will the results of your tummy tuck last?

The very considerable benefits of a tummy tuck last extremely well. Patients can help to maintain the results of their surgery by pursuing a sensible life style, including regular exercise, weight regulation and diet.

Any subsequent pregnancy may again result in some degree of skin sag and stretch marks and recurrent muscle weakness. Consequently patients should only consider tummy tucks when they are certain that they have no plans for future pregnancies.