

Abdominoplasty (Tummy Tuck)

What is abdominoplasty?

Abdominoplasty [ab-DOM-ih-noh-plas-tee] is a surgery to remove extra fat and skin from the abdomen (belly), and to move and repair weak muscles in the belly. This procedure is commonly known as a **tummy tuck**. A tummy tuck is considered a nonessential cosmetic surgery to slim the waistline.

How is a tummy tuck done?

To remove extra fat, doctors use a technique called **liposuction** [LIP-oh-suhk-shuhn] to remove fat and shape the body. Liposuction is done with a narrow, metal **cannula**. The cannula is inserted through small incisions (cuts) in the skin to remove the fat.

To remove extra skin, the doctor makes an incision across the lower belly. A second incision may be needed at the belly button to take off extra skin in that area.

To tighten weak muscles, strong sutures (stitches) are used to shift the weakened muscles and hold them in place.

What risks come with a tummy tuck?

The most common potential risks and complications are:

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Infection
- Blood clots
- Numbness or lack of feeling in the abdomen (belly)
- Scarring or poor healing at the incision site
- Normal risks that come with anesthesia
- Reaction to medicines
- Dissatisfaction with your appearance after the procedure

What do I need to do right now?

- Arrange for a responsible adult to go with you to the surgery center and to help care for you for a few days after your procedure.
- Arrange for time off of work. You may need a week or more to recover.
- Make your medicine list and give it to your doctor (see below).

There may be other risks with your unique medical situation. Talking with your doctor is the best way to learn about these risks and complications. If you have questions, be sure to ask.

How do I get ready?

Follow all of your doctor's instructions. Make a list of all of the medicines you are taking. Be sure to include all prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines (such as allergy pills or cough syrup), inhalers, patches, vitamin supplements, or herbal remedies. You may need to stop taking some of them before surgery.



The surgical facility will usually contact you and give instructions for:

- When to arrive for surgery.
- When to stop eating and drinking before your procedure.
- If you need to have blood tests before your surgery.

Arrange for someone to come with you to the hospital and to help care for you during the first few days of recovery.

What should I expect?

You can expect to:

- Be given medicine to make you sleep during the procedure and to help with pain control and nausea when you wake up from your surgery.
- Have an abdominal binder (a wide, stretchy compression belt) over your incisions to help support your belly after surgery.
- Have surgical drains to remove fluid and help your wounds heal.
- Recover from the anesthetic for several hours before going home.
- Get detailed instructions from your doctor on how to care for yourself at home. For your safety, take any prescribed medicines exactly as ordered by your doctor.
- Be asked to schedule a follow-up visit so your doctor can check to see how you are healing and remove any drains and sutures (stitches).



When should I call my doctor?

Call your doctor if you have:

- Trouble breathing
- A fever above 101°F (38° C) or chills that last more than 12 hours
- Nausea or vomiting that does not stop
- Pain that isn't controlled or is getting worse
- Bright red blood in a drain collector or seeping from a bandage
- A rash or reaction to the medicines you've been prescribed
- Problems tolerating the medicines you've been prescribed.



Questions for my doctor



My follow-up appointment

Date/Time: _____

Place: _____

Doctor: _____

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