

Tummy Tuck (Abdominoplasty)

If You're Considering Abdominoplasty...

Abdominoplasty, known more commonly as a "tummy tuck," is a major surgical procedure to remove excess skin and fat from the middle and lower abdomen and to tighten the muscles of the abdominal wall. The procedure can dramatically reduce the appearance of a protruding abdomen. But bear in mind, it does produce a permanent scar, which, depending on the extent of the original problem and the surgery required to correct it, can extend from hip to hip.

If you're considering abdominoplasty, this will give you a basic understanding of the procedure-when it can help, how it's performed, and what results you can expect. It can't answer all of your questions, since a lot depends on the individual patient and the surgeon. Please ask your surgeon about anything you don't understand.

The Best Candidates For Abdominoplasty

The best candidates for abdominoplasty are men or women who are in relatively good shape but are bothered by a large fat deposit or loose abdominal skin that won't respond to diet or exercise. The surgery is particularly helpful to women who, through multiple pregnancies, have stretched their abdominal muscles and skin beyond the point where they can return to normal. Loss of skin elasticity in older patients, which frequently occurs with slight obesity, can also be improved.

Patients who intend to lose a lot of weight should postpone the surgery. Also, women who plan future pregnancies should wait, as vertical muscles in the abdomen that are tightened during surgery can separate again during pregnancy. If you have scarring from previous abdominal surgery, your doctor may recommend against abdominoplasty or may caution you that scars could be unusually prominent.

Abdominoplasty can enhance your appearance and your self-confidence, but it won't necessarily change your looks to match your ideal, or cause other people to treat you differently. Before you decide to have surgery, think carefully about your expectations and discuss them with your surgeon.