

# Tummy Tucks for All Sizes

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Tummy tuck, or abdominoplasty, is the one contouring operation that can be done for patients of all sizes and shapes. From the 4'11" 98lb-er to the 5'9" 250lb-er, improvement in the shape and contour of these patients is possible. There are many indications for having a tummy tuck. Some women, despite their best intentions of aggressive exercise and good nutrition just can't seem to get their stomachs in the shape they desire through weight loss. These patients could have a nice improvement that may just jumpstart their will power and help them lose additional weight after their recovery.

## **Mommy Makeover**

Another group of patients are those wanting their "mommy makeover", correcting the weak abdominal wall following pregnancy. Many patients want to regain the shape they had before pregnancy with some getting a better contour than they had before ever having children. These patients get a significant improvement. Not only is the weakness resolved but many of the unsightly stretch marks between the belly button and the groin are removed with the excess skin.

## **Significant Weight Loss**

A third group of patients are those who have lost significant amounts of weight with or without bariatric surgery. The tummy tuck is the cornerstone operation for this patient as all other contouring of the truck will depend on a well done abdominoplasty to anchor the remaining procedures that remove and tuck their excess skin and soft tissue. In some of these patients appropriate tension on the anterior incision can alleviate the need for skin tightening of the medial thigh.

## **The "Mini" Tummy Tuck**

There are several different "varieties" of the tummy tuck. There is the "mini" which



addresses the laxity in the abdominal wall only up to the belly button. Less skin is taken out compared to the full where abdominal wall tightening is completed from the bottom of the breast bone to the pubic bone and tension is placed on the entire anterior abdominal wall skin. There is no incision around the belly button. The mini is only used for minimal deformity in the low abdomen. The abdominal wall is repaired only up to the belly button, and most patients have weakness higher.

## **The Full Tummy Tuck**

A full abdominoplasty (or tummy tuck) uses a longer low transverse incision, which many times can be hidden under your tan lines. The loose overhanging skin and stretch marks are removed from between the incision and the belly button. The stomach wall weakness is repaired. And the belly button is replaced into the anterior wall skin. This procedure improves the shape size and contour of the abdomen by: flattening the protruding abdominal wall, tightening the upper thigh and pubic area, as well as removing the "spare tire" no one wants to carry around.

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### **Pain Control**

Pain control is important and can include use of a pain pump and multiple medications to alleviate postoperative discomfort. Good pain management has previously been discussed in the October 2008 *Healthy Cells Magazines* (Peoria, Bloomington and Northwest Suburbs issues) which detailed additional benefits.

### **Tummy Tuck in Combination with Liposuction**

Tummy tuck for body contouring can be used in combination with liposuction to improve hips thighs and buttocks at the same time. Breast augmentation has also been a common additional procedure. Ask what your plastic surgeon feels is safe to combine as every patient will require a personalized plan for their body contouring.

### **Combined Surgeries Means One Recovery Period**

Non-cosmetic cases can also be done in combination with a tummy tuck and they include hysterectomy, urinary incontinence procedures and hernia repairs. The obvious benefit to these is that the patient has only one recovery period and has the cost savings of one time off work that is part of your medical leave. By utilizing state-of-the-art techniques for DVT (Deep Vein Thrombosis) prophylaxis and patient warming it has been shown in studies (see references below) that combining abdominoplasty with additional cases can be very safe and provide extreme patient satisfaction.

Combined surgeries will usually require overnight stay in a recovery care center or hospital. Abdominoplasty is becoming an outpatient procedure as long as the patient has excellent support from friends and family. However, some plastic surgeons prefer to admit all tummy tuck

patients to the hospital for an overnight stay as a precaution.

### **Finding the Right Plastic Surgeon**

Selecting your plastic surgeon does require some effort on the part of the patient. Make sure you get to see several examples of the plastic surgeon's results and are comfortable with their methods to keep you safe during and after your tummy tuck. Attention to detail and good rapport can turn a much sought after but frightening proposal to a wonderful and effortless result.

### **References:**

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