

# Abdominoplasty



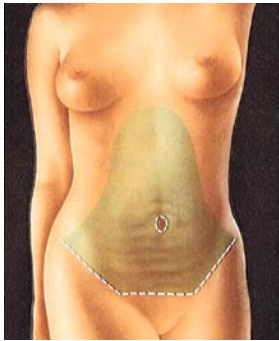
# ABOUT OUR PRACTICE

“We believe it is important for any patient to know as much as possible about their surgery, their physician, and their options. We approach each patient on an individualized basis, learning as much as possible about their goals in my initial consultation. Our practice is designed to provide patients with a comfortable atmosphere where they can feel safe and confident about their medical care.”

*Frederick J. Duffy, Jr., MD, FACS & Brice W. McKane, MD, FACS*

## PROCEDURE DESCRIPTION

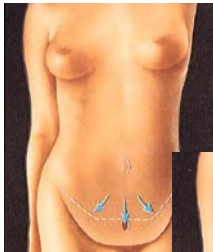
The abdominoplasty (commonly known as a "tummy tuck") is a procedure designed to remove both fat and skin from the lower abdomen. This procedure typically involves tightening the underlying muscles of the abdominal wall as well. This body contouring procedure can dramatically improve the way a protruding abdomen looks and is most commonly performed in women after childbearing years. It is important to realize, however, that like many other body contouring procedures the patient trades a scar for improved contour.



The abdominoplasty typically involves incisions around the navel and on the lower section of the abdomen (the white dashed lines)

The skin and underlying tissues are “pulled” from the incision and higher up on the abdomen (the shaded areas) to tighten the abdominal tissues.

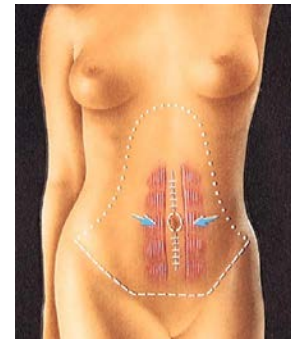
The abdominal muscles may also be tightened to help further improve the contour of the abdomen.



The tissues are then pulled down tightly and the excess tissue cut away.



and a much flatter abdominal contour



The incision is closed, leaving the patient with a much flatter abdominal contour.

The best candidates for abdominoplasty are men or women who are in relatively good shape but are bothered by centralized fat deposits and loose abdominal skin. Typically there is a component of loosened or stretched abdominal wall and excess fat and skin and all of these can be addressed with this operation. Patients often need a full abdominoplasty but more limited versions of the procedure can be performed when only a small amount of fat and skin need to be removed.

An abdominoplasty is performed under general anesthesia. Depending upon the extent of the procedure, patients may go home the same day or may spend a day or two in the hospital. Patients who have a full abdominoplasty generally take 4-6 weeks to feel totally normal.

## PREPARING FOR SURGERY

### UPON SCHEDULING YOUR PROCEDURE

Healthy patients recover from surgery more quickly, heal better, and are less likely to have complications following surgery. It is crucial that you discuss any underlying health problems with your surgeon so that the risk of complications can be minimized.

Smoking may lead to poor wound healing. Smokers are much more likely to have delays in healing as smoking reduces circulation to the skin and tissues. We strongly encourage you to stop smoking before surgery. If you are a smoker, please inform your surgeon.

It is important that you discuss any and all medications you are currently taking. It may be necessary to stop taking medications containing aspirin or ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) before surgery. Both of these drugs are blood-thinning agents and can cause bleeding problems during and after surgery. It is also important that you inform us about any herbal or holistic supplements you are taking. Some of these products may be associated with bleeding problems. You may need to consult with your primary care physician if you have any concerns about the medications that you are currently taking. Do not discontinue taking any medication without the approval of the prescribing physician.

### THE DAY PRIOR TO SURGERY

In most cases you will be given a prescription for postoperative medications when you come to our office for your final appointment before surgery. We recommend you go ahead and fill that prescription at your pharmacy before the day of surgery, so that it will be available to you when you return home after surgery. If you have any questions about your medications, you can consult your pharmacist or ask your surgeon when he sees you prior to the surgery.

You will be unable to drive yourself home after surgery, and the hospital/surgical facility will not allow you to leave in a cab by yourself. Therefore it is important to arrange to have someone take you to surgery and bring you home after you are released from the surgical facility. It is also required that you have someone stay with you for at least 24 hours after surgery.

We recommend avoiding any alcoholic beverage for 24 hours prior to surgery as alcohol may dehydrate you. It is also very important that you do not eat or drink anything, including water, after 12:00 midnight the night before surgery. If you need to take any medications during this time, take it with as little water as possible.

Your anesthesiologist will call you the night before surgery. If they are not able to reach you, you will be able to ask any questions upon your arrival at the surgical facility.

## **THE DAY OF SURGERY**

It is important you have nothing to eat or drink, including water, after midnight prior to surgery. If you eat or drink prior to surgery it may be necessary to cancel the surgery. If medications are to be taken, please take them early in the morning if possible with only a sip of water. All medications should only be taken if authorized with the anesthesiologist or your surgeon.

Be sure to wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing that does not have to be pulled over your head. Do not wear hairpins or jewelry. Do not bring any money or valuables with you to the surgical facility.

## WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SURGERY

**Dressings & bandages:** You will be fitted with a dressing (bandage) placed at the conclusion of your surgery. This dressing will be removed at your first postoperative visit, which is typically 2 or 3 days following your surgery. After your initial dressing comes off, you will be instructed on what sort of dressing to wear for the next couple of weeks. During this time you may remove the dressing to shower whenever you like. All sutures used during the surgery are absorbable and the incisions will be covered with Steri-Strips (tape-like closures). These pieces of tape will eventually fall off and as they begin to curl up you may gently remove them.

**Abdominal binder:** You will also have an abdominal binder after surgery. This can be removed for bathing and dressing changes but should be worn as much as possible for at least a couple of weeks after surgery. This minimizes seromas and many patients report it helps with discomfort after surgery when they first begin moving around.

**Drains:** During surgery drains may be placed in the abdomen. These are plastic tubes coming from small incisions and connecting to a bulb that holds fluid. These drains are designed to help your body drain excess fluid and reduce the chance of developing unusual swelling or seromas (collections of fluid). If you have drains placed during surgery, the nurses will give you instructions on how to handle the drains. The drains are typically left in place for approximately one week after surgery.

**Swelling and bruising:** Moderate swelling and bruising may occur after any surgical procedure. If they are excessive or continuous, it may be indicative of bleeding or infection and our office should be notified as soon as possible.

**Pain:** You will definitely be sore, particularly the first few days following your surgery. This pain typically persists for a week or so but is usually worse the first couple of days. You will be given pain medication following your surgery. You should plan on eating and drinking very lightly the evening after your surgery, as nausea following general anesthesia is fairly common. The pain medicine will not totally alleviate your pain but the goal is to make you as comfortable as possible, particularly in the first few days. Even after you no longer need regular pain medication you may experience some discomfort in the abdomen, particularly when lifting or moving in a fashion that utilizes the abdominal muscles, for some weeks after surgery.

**Numbness:** During the procedure, it is likely that some of the sensory nerves to the skin will be cut. It is also possible to experience some numbness from the local anesthetic that is administered during the procedure. It can be expected that most normal nerve activity will return within 2-3 months as the nerve endings heal. However, some procedures are associated with a higher risk for areas of permanent numbness. With an abdominoplasty the most common areas of numbness are around the incisions.

**Itching:** You may experience some external itching following your surgery. The surgical prep solutions can cause some skin dryness and the surgical tapes occasionally irritate the skin. Keeping the skin clean and moisturized should minimize the discomfort from the irritation.

**Bleeding:** It is normal to experience some bleeding from the incision site. You may notice some blood on your dressings following your surgery. It should not be excessive and you should notify the office if any excessive bleeding occurs.

**Seeing Your Results:** You will be able to see a significant improvement in the abdominal contour immediately after surgery. However, because you will be swollen you will not be able to see the final result until the swelling is gone. The majority of the swelling is gone within the first couple of weeks but there will probably be some mild swelling for several weeks or even months after that. Be aware your results will continue to improve as the swelling resolves.

**Smoking:** Smoking, even after surgery, will delay the healing process. If at all possible, smoking should be stopped 2 to 3 weeks prior to surgery and you should make every effort not to smoke for at least a month following surgery.

**Workout Routine:** You will not be able to perform any excessive physical activity for at least the first two to three weeks. Walking will be encouraged, but no abdominal exercises should be done. You should avoid any abdominal exercises or activities that require use of the abdominal muscles until your surgeon releases you to do these activities.

**Sexual Activity:** It is advisable to abstain from sexual activity at least until after your first post-operative appointment.

You will likely feel tired and weak for a variable amount of time after your surgery. You may have intermittent nausea and some dizziness. Constipation is also occasionally a problem because of the pain medicine you are taking. You will gradually get better, although you may experience periods of ups and downs. If you have any questions, we encourage you to call the office. We will make every effort to make this procedure as pleasant for you as it can possibly be.

## GENERAL SURGICAL RISKS

It is important that you fully understand the risks associated with any surgery. We encourage you to obtain as much information as possible about the surgical procedure and the associated risks. If you have questions and concerns about the procedure or risks, we encourage you to ask us to help you to better understand them. We want you to make an informed decision about your surgery.

As with any surgery, there are risks associated with the anesthesia and with surgery in general. Pulmonary embolism (blood clots of the lungs), severe allergic reactions to medications of anesthetic, cardiac complications, heart attack, stroke and even death are rare but potential risks of any surgical procedure. You will receive a detailed surgical consent prior to surgery and will have the opportunity to discuss the risks. The risks listed below are only some of the more common risks associated with an abdominoplasty. All of these are infrequent, but it is important you are aware of the possibility of these risks.

**Thick, wide or depressed scars:** You will have a scar in the lower abdomen, typically running from one hip to the other. There will also be scar around the umbilicus (belly button). As your incisions heal, your body creates new collagen that forms a scar. The majority of the healing process takes place in the first few weeks after surgery. However, you should be aware that scars take up to a full year to reach their final appearance. Depending upon the healing process, a scar may be abnormally wide, dark, or depressed. You will be started on a program of scar massage several weeks following your surgery to help the healing process. If abnormal scarring occurs, there are a variety of non-surgical and surgical solutions that will be presented to you. However, you should be aware there will always be a scar in this region.

**Delayed healing:** Some patients heal at a slower rate than others. Factors that play a role in delayed healing include (but are not limited to) infection, decreased circulation and smoking, poor nutrition, advanced age, prior surgery or radiation, Lupus, or other diseases such as Diabetes. It may be necessary to have wound care treatment of a delayed open area for weeks after surgery if you have any wound healing complications. Dr. Duffy and Dr. McKane specialize in wound care, with patients referred to our practice by other surgeons with complex wounds, so they will be able to provide you experienced care if you have any healing complications.

**Unsatisfactory result:** You have decided to have a board-certified plastic surgeon perform a procedure to enhance or improve the appearance of a specific part of your body. Plastic surgeons are specially trained and strive to give you the most pleasing and aesthetic result. Although these procedures are performed to improve the appearance of an area, it is important to remember that complications occur and that sometimes expectations are not achieved. Some procedures will require a secondary procedure or revision surgery to help achieve the result you were striving for. It may even be possible that the result you want cannot be achieved.

**Bleeding:** It is possible, though unusual, to experience a bleeding episode during or after surgery. Should post-operative bleeding occur, it may require emergency

treatment to drain accumulated blood or blood transfusion. Do not take any aspirin or anti-inflammatory medications for ten days before surgery, as this may increase the risk of bleeding. Non-prescription “herbs” and dietary supplements can increase the risk of surgical bleeding.

**Infection:** Infection is unusual after this type of surgery. Infection is more likely when there is delayed wound healing. If an infection occurs, treatment may be necessary including antibiotics or hospitalization.

**Contour irregularities:** Contour irregularities, asymmetries, and depressions may occur after abdominoplasty. Visible and palpable wrinkling of skin can occur. Some patients experience a puckering of the skin at either end of the incision near the hip bones. These are often called “dog ears”. These can be surgically corrected under local anesthesia here in our office.

**Seroma:** Fluid accumulations infrequently occur between the skin and the abdominal wall. Should this problem occur, it may require additional procedures for drainage of the fluid.

**Long term effects:** Although the abdominoplasty is designed to improve the abdominal contour, subsequent changes may occur due to age, weight loss or gain, pregnancy, or other circumstances. Therefore the results may not be permanent.

**Additional Surgery:** Should complications occur, additional surgery or other treatments may be necessary. Even though risks and complications occur infrequently, the risks cited are particularly associated with abdominoplasty. Other complications and risks can occur but are even more uncommon. The practice of medicine and surgery is not an exact science. Although good results are expected, there is no guarantee or warranty expressed or implied, on the results that may be obtained.

## INFORMATION ABOUT SCARS AND SCARRING

Every surgical procedure involves some form of scarring. The amount of scarring, length of the scars, and the location of the scars is very much a function of the type of surgery that is performed. The scars may be small and straight such as in a breast augmentation, or they may be very long and prone to widening such as in a tummy tuck or abdominoplasty.

With any surgical procedure, it is important to realize that every scar, regardless of size, goes through a process of healing that lasts as long as a year. Regardless of the size of a scar, scars are often initially slightly raised and somewhat reddened. They are occasionally painful. As scars heal, patients will occasionally note that the scars are very sensitive and this may take months to resolve.

Scars will soften as they heal and become less reddened and usually end up pale and flush with the skin. However, it is important to realize that any scar may be raised, widened, or permanently numb as can the skin around the scar. Most patients' scars go through the normal process of healing and rather quickly end up looking very good. However, problems can occur with any scarring and wound healing process regardless of the success of the operation itself. Each individual patient heals differently, and even the same patient may notice a difference in the healing process from one surgery to the next.

There are a number of things that you, the patient, can do to minimize the appearance of surgical scars. We encourage all patients to begin a program of scar massage several weeks after surgery. This improves the blood supply to the skin and he believes this softens the scars quicker. It is also very important to strictly avoid sun exposure to any scar for a year following any surgical procedure, particularly on the face or other sun-exposed area. If you need assistance choosing a sunblock product, please speak with our esthetician. Additionally, smoking has an extremely detrimental impact on any wound healing process and may result in a poor scar appearance.

If a scar is prominent there are treatments which may be recommended including scar revisions. These treatments are designed to improve scarring where possible, but it is not possible to "erase" a scar. The goal is to avoid a problematic scar. Some patients are prone to hypertrophic scars or keloids. If you have a history of problematic scars you should be certain your surgeon is made aware of this prior to any surgical procedure.

It is always our goal to have patients well informed prior to any surgery. Because it is impossible to do a surgical procedure without some type of scarring, we provide this information to help you be aware of the process of scarring and wound healing. It is important to realize the healing process does occur over time and may take weeks, months, or even a year or more to achieve a final result.

If you have any questions regarding the location and type of scarring associated with the particular procedure(s) you are considering, please do not hesitate to ask for additional information.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The cost of cosmetic surgery involves several different components. These consist of the surgeon's fee, the operating room fee (often called the facility fee), and the anesthesia fee. In addition, depending on the type of surgery being performed there may also be the cost of implants. We will provide you with a written quote of the costs for surgery, including anesthesia and the surgical facility costs. Many minor procedures can be performed in our office surgical suite under local anesthesia, which allows us to pass a cost savings on to our patients as well as provide a comfortable surrounding.

Scheduling of any surgery requires the commitment of time and resources by your surgeon as well as the anesthesiologist and the facility where the surgery is to be performed. Therefore, a deposit is necessary to reserve your surgery date. The deposit is 10% of the surgeon's fees. Full payment for the procedure will be due one week prior to the surgery date. Failure to make this payment will result in cancellation of the surgery and forfeiture of the deposit. If surgery is cancelled for non-medical reasons within one week of the surgery date, the 10% deposit will be forfeited. If surgery is cancelled due to medical reasons or a family emergency, a full refund will be made, including the deposit.

Please be aware that there may be additional charges incurred for preoperative testing, such as bloodwork, EKG, and Chest x-rays. If you cancel surgery after having completed your preoperative testing, you will still be billed by the hospital/surgical facility for those tests. Insurance policies will not cover these items.

As with any procedure, there is always a possibility of complications following surgery. If those complications require additional hospitalization and/or procedures, there could be additional charges. Of course, serious complications are extremely unusual. It is important to remember that health insurance will not pay for any hospitalization, medication, or other healthcare provided as a result of a complication from a cosmetic procedure.

It is impossible for anyone, including your physician, to guarantee the results of any surgical procedure. While every effort possible is made to insure the results you desire, you may not achieve exactly what you hoped. It may be possible to improve the results with additional surgeries, but those will involve additional costs. Please understand that the payments you make to your physician, hospital, and anesthesiologist are for their expertise and services. If the results do not meet your expectations, it is not possible to refund any portion of the payments made.

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## FINANCING COSMETIC SURGERY

Our office does not offer financing programs through the office directly. It has always been our policy to focus on the health and well being of our patients, rather than on

financing. However, there are a number of financing programs which can be utilized which are not done directly through our office and we are happy to make our patients aware of these programs.

### **TRADITIONAL FINANCING PROGRAMS**

There are a variety of options available for financing of cosmetic procedures. Some patients finance utilizing their credit cards or by loans from their own banks. Our office accepts Mastercard, Visa, Discover, and American Express. There is also a Compass Bank in our building which does loans for cosmetic procedures, as do most banks.