

WHAT IS A TUMMY TUCK (ABDOMINOPLASTY)?

Abdominoplasty, commonly known as a “tummy tuck,” is a procedure designed to remove excess skin and fat from your abdominal area. It also involves tightening the underlying (rectus) muscles so that you are left with as flat a tummy as possible. It is not intended for weight loss, but to improve body contouring.

Age, weight changes and pregnancy can leave you with a less than flat abdomen that no amount of exercise and diet can fix. That sagging belly is due to the muscles on either side of your belly button stretching and separating due to weight gain or pregnancy. This can cause a rounding out of your abdomen and potentially increase lower back pain. If you were to do 1000 sit-ups, it still would not give you those washboard abs because the fascia around the muscles is torn and stretched. An abdominoplasty not only tightens and repairs this weakness but also removes all the excess skin and fat from above your belly button to your pubic bone.

Liposuction is sometimes needed to help define your waist and lessen the pubic area.

PRE-SURGERY CHECKLIST

1. Prescriptions filled before surgery and Tylenol
2. Dressings (gauze or maxi pads/panty liners works well)
3. Antibiotic ointment (Polysporin) or Vaseline
4. Q-tips
5. Paper tape
6. Ice packs
7. Notebook to record drainage amount
8. Lots of fluids you like to drink
9. Pillows for behind your knees when lying
10. Small pillow to hug if coughing/sneezing
11. Comfortable place to rest/sleep that you can bend your knees and have your back elevated slightly
12. Stop the use of all anti-inflammatories 2-weeks before after your surgery. (Tylenol is fine to use)
13. Lots of good movies and books at your fingertips
14. Comfy pants and tops that you can easily get on and off
15. Pre-plan/make meals as you won't feel like cooking
16. Book an appointment to see Dr MacDonald after your surgery

AFTER SURGERY

1. Avoid any activity that increases your heart rate for 6 weeks after surgery. Slow walking right away is recommended.
2. After surgery take slow, deep breaths and keep your legs moving.
3. Adjust the binder as needed to make it more comfortable and wear 24/7 for 6 weeks. Add extra padding under binder if needed.
4. Do not shower until drains come out – usually day 5-7 post-op.
5. After every shower apply antibiotic ointment or vaseline gently with a q-tip and cover. Continue for 2 weeks.
6. Apply ice the first 48 hours if needed.
7. Massage your scars with a gentle cream or ointment starting 2-weeks after surgery for 1-2 minutes 3x day then wipe clean and apply paper tape or gel sheeting. Use constantly until you're happy with the scar.
8. Avoid Vitamin E creams or ointments.
9. Sleep on your back with knees bent and back slightly elevated.
10. If the dressing falls off or becomes soiled, please remove it and replace with new dressing (e.g. maxi pads work well for replacement dressings).
11. All the stitches are dissolving.
12. The nurse will show you how to care for your drains before you leave the hospital.
13. If one of the drain tubes becomes blocked, it may leak around the drain site. Simply reinforce the base with a dressing (e.g. maxi pad) and call my office; if after hours, then call my office the next day.
14. Time off work is 4-6-weeks.
15. Burning or itchiness is normal.
16. Swelling (especially around the pubic area or lower abdomen) and/or bruising is normal and will settle over time.
17. You may have an altered stream when urinating for a few days.
18. Numbness of the skin of the upper legs and/or lower abdomen is normal.
19. You can drive when you are no longer taking any pain medication and feel comfortable to do so.