

GOLD COAST

Plastic Surgery



ULTIMATE GUIDE TO A TUMMY TUCK

(07) 5598 0988

www.goldcoastplasticsurgery.com.au

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN A ABDOMINOPLASTY?

A tummy tuck, or abdominoplasty, is a surgical procedure that removes excess fat and skin from the stomach area. It will also tighten weakened and loose abdominal muscles to give the stomach a flatter, firmer appearance.

During the procedure, an incision is made in the lower abdominal region, allowing your surgeon to access and repair the muscles that comprise the abdominal wall and remove excess fat, tissue, and skin. Depending on the individual patient, a second, higher incision may be made near the navel to excise fat and skin in the upper portion of the stomach. Liposuction may be used to remove excess fat during a tummy tuck.



ABDOMINOPLASTY OPERATION

There are two types of abdominoplasty:

- Full abdominoplasty – this removes excess skin and tightens underlying muscles across the whole abdominal area, including around the navel.
- Partial abdominoplasty – this removes excess skin below the navel and tightens the lower abdominal muscles only.

The operation is usually performed under general anaesthetic. The length of the operation will depend on the extent of the surgery, but it could take up to three hours.

A full abdominoplasty involves:

- The surgeon makes a horizontal, curved incision (cut) near the pubic hairline, which runs from one hip to the other
- Skin and fatty tissue are lifted from the underlying tissue
- Stitch and tighten slack or separated abdominal muscles
- Excess fat is removed. Surplus skin is trimmed
- The navel is repositioned. The wounds are closed with stitches, tape or clips.

TUMMY TUCK CONSIDERATIONS

During the first consultation, you will be asked about the desired results you are looking to achieve. If you plan to get pregnant or lose weight, discuss this with your surgeon as a tummy tuck may not be suitable for you right now. An abdominoplasty is designed primarily for patients who are mostly satisfied with their weight, but who have excess skin and loose muscle around their midsections. Abdominoplasty is not a substitute for weight loss or exercise. It may be possible to achieve a flatter stomach without surgery, through healthy eating and exercise, but not always. We recommend that abdominoplasty be considered only after dieting and exercise have achieved the right body shape underneath.

IDEAL CANDIDATES ARE THOSE WHO:

The following conditions could indicate that a tummy tuck is right for you:

- Tightening excess skin to eliminate loose and sagging skin
- Tightening the underlying abdominal muscles to create a firmer abdominal wall
- Removing excess fat to eliminate a protruding tummy
- Maintaining a stable weight, with no plans for future pregnancies

DO I NEED A REFERRAL FROM A GP TO BOOK A CONSULTATION?

You do not need to have a medical referral from a GP or specialist to book a consultation, however, it is recommended. Having a referral may allow you to claim a small rebate back on your initial consultation with your surgeon.

BEFORE SURGERY RECOMMENDATIONS



Your surgeon needs to know your medical history to plan your treatment. Fully disclose any health problems you have had now and in the past.

Please advise the surgeon if you have had:

- Any allergy or bad reaction to antibiotics, anesthetic drugs, any other medicines, surgical tapes or dressings
- Prolonged bleeding or excessive bruising when injured.
- Previous problems with blood clots in the lungs or a deep vein of the leg (deep vein thrombosis, DVT)
- Any recent or long term illness
- Previous surgery
- Any bad scarring or poorly healed scars after previous surgeries

WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM MY INITIAL CONSULTATION?

At your initial consultation you can expect to:

- Have your photos taken
- Have a physical examination
- See before and afters from past patients
- Find out more about your recommended surgical options
- Receive detailed information about your selected options
- Go through the possible risks involved with your associated surgery
- Have any questions answered that you may have with Dr Mark Doyle
- Speak with our client advisor and receive information about your surgery pricing and available dates for surgery

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE SURGERY?

The tummy tuck procedure is performed under general anaesthetic and your incision will generally be made below your bikini line if possible. However, this is not always the case as it usually depends on the extent of the surgery. Most commonly, incisions are made from hip to hip along the pubic bone. The incision length and exact locations will depend on the specific areas that require treatment as well as the amount of excess skin that needs removing.



From the incision to the lower ribs, the skin and underlying fat are lifted free of the underlying vertical abdominal muscles. The muscles are then surgically tightened by stitching them into position. This will strengthen the abdomen and result in a smaller, more shapely waistline. During this procedure, if necessary a small amount of targeted liposuction will get rid of stubborn fat deposits to achieve a more contoured shape.

Once the skin is removed and the remaining skin is pulled tighter, the naval is stitched into its new position. The long incision is closed with stitches, and the dressing is applied. Plastic drain tubes will be inserted to drain fluid from the area. These will likely remain for up to 7 days after the procedure.

A "pain pump" may be inserted into the abdominal tissues. This is a small tube connected to a plastic bottle which contains local anaesthetic. The anaesthetic is slowly infused into the tissues to decrease pain and normally works for the first 3-7 days following the surgery.

In extreme cases, where excess skin laxity is substantial, patients may require multiple operations in order to achieve full results. Similarly, the total length of time required for the procedure will vary substantially depending on your personal circumstances.



WHAT RISKS MAY BE INVOLVED?

Like any major surgery, a abdominoplasty poses a risk of bleeding, infection, seroma (fluid accumulation) and an adverse reaction to anaesthesia. It's also possible to have an allergic reaction to the surgical tape or other materials used during or after the procedure. Potential complications will be discussed during your consultation with Dr. Doyle.

You can help minimise certain risks by following the advice and instructions of your surgeon, both before and after your surgery. If you have any concerns about the risks involved with surgery, please consult Dr Mark Doyle and his team at Gold Coast Plastic Surgery.



RECOVERY FROM AN ABDOMINOPLASTY

When surgery is complete, you will be taken into a recovery area where you will be closely monitored for an overnight stay in hospital, unless otherwise informed.

This is what the recovery process may look like:

- Small drain tubes will have been placed within the abdominal tissues to help avoid an accumulation of fluids. These drains will likely stay in for the first 7 days after surgery. Our nurses will call you daily to record the amount that has drained from your body.
- A small tube will have been placed within the abdominal tissues which are connected to a plastic bottle containing local anaesthetic which is slowly infused into the tissues to decrease pain. This is called a "pain pump" and normally works for the first 3-7 days following the surgery.
- Your incision will most likely run from hip to hip and there will be internal sutures that will dissolve in up to 6 months post-op.
- The incision will be covered by prineo tape (clear, waterproof skin closure system) over the suture line with a large dressing tape covering your abdomen, and a tight abdominal binder. The tape will remain for 3 weeks whilst the outer dressing may be removed before leaving the hospital.



RECOVERY FROM AN ABDOMINOPLASTY CONTINUED

- Expect your body to have some pain and discomfort. If pain persists, please contact your anaesthetist to discuss this further.
- You will be encouraged to go for short walks to promote blood circulation and the risk of blood clotting the following day after surgery.
- It is advised that you try not to sit for long periods of time during the first several days and avoid straining, bending and lifting.
- Dr. Mark Doyle will instruct you to sleep on your back with a pillow under your knees.
- Within a week of surgery your surgical drains will most likely be removed.
- You may be instructed to wear a support garment 23 hrs per day for 6 weeks depending on where the incisions were made.
- Stitches will be removed. Bruising and some of the swelling will occur and disappear over a period of weeks.
- Approximately 10 days after surgery you will be reviewed by our nurse. During the visit, the sutures will be removed from your bellybutton site and your Prineo Tape will be checked.
- Approximately 3 weeks after surgery you will again be reviewed by one of our nurses and your Prineo Tape will be removed. During this visit, you will be shown how to care for your wounds to ensure proper care.
- It is recommended that every 4-5 days the Fixomull is removed in the shower and the area is gently dried. Inspect the area for infection and apply a new stripe of Fixomull. Repeat until you are 6 weeks post operation.
- 6 weeks after the surgery you may commence using a topical scar treatment such as vitamin E or silicone gel. Your scars will be reddened for about 12 months after surgery, and then it should start to fade and soften. Please avoid direct sunlight on the scarring areas and wear sunscreen when in the sun.
- You will be seen by Dr. Mark Doyle approximately 6 to 8 weeks post-surgery and will have further review appointments if required. During this time you will have postoperative photos taken for your medical records.

IMPORTANT REMINDER

It is important to remind everyone that each surgical journey is different from the next and each individual's results and procedure may vary.

COMMON QUESTIONS



IS A TUMMY TUCK COVERED BY MEDICARE OR MY PRIVATE HEALTH FUND?

Medical Reasons for a abdominoplasty include:

- Skin irritation due to excess skin
- Flappy skin from rapid weight loss
- Seperated abdominal muscles
- Back pain

If considered medically necessary, medicare may cover a small proportion of the costs associated with the surgery. You will need to provide details to your health fund to see if they will cover you and to what extent.

IS AN ABDOMINOPLASTY PAINFUL?

Most surgery involves discomfort and pain during the healing stages. It can be difficult to predict the pain levels as each individual's pain and discomfort may vary.

WHEN CAN I RETURN TO WORK?

The time taken to recover before returning to work or daily activities often varies depending on each person and their role at work. Typically most people return to work a couple of weeks after the initial surgery. Evidence shows that those patients who were physically fit before surgery recover faster than those who were not as fit. It is recommended that no heavy lifting is done 12 weeks after surgery to ensure the body had time to heal.

HOW LONG AFTER SURGERY UNTIL I CAN DRIVE AGAIN?

You are not allowed to drive for 3 weeks after your procedure. This is due to the decreased movement in your abdominal area and the inability to move freely. After 3 weeks if you can move and react without pain and are no longer on any pain medication you may recommence driving. Please check with your insurance as each policy can be different and it is a general rule of thumb that you will not be covered for 6 weeks after surgery as you are not able to react or move in a safe manner.

WILL I NEED TO STOP SMOKING BEFORE HAVING SURGERY?

It is recommended that you completely stop smoking at least 6 weeks before surgery. This is to ensure that the body can heal to the best of its ability. Smoking decreases the oxygen that is carried throughout your blood, therefore slowing the time taken for your skin to heal from a surgical incision.

WHAT CAN I DO TO MINIMISE ANY SCARRING?

Any surgery procedure that involved an incision will result in a scar. However, after 6 weeks post-surgery you may commence using a topical scar treatment such as vitamin E or silicone gel. Your scars will be reddened for about 12 months after surgery, and then it should start to fade and soften. Please avoid direct sunlight on the scarring areas and wear sunscreen when in the sun.

WHEN CAN I RETURN TO DAILY ACTIVITIES?

Start walking as soon as possible to help reduce the swelling and lower the risk of blood clots. Sexual activity should be avoided for a minimum of 4-6 weeks. Light exercise may commence 4 to 6 weeks after surgery.

WHEN CAN I EXERCISE AGAIN?

Most patients may resume light exercise after 4 to 6 weeks. It is recommended at strenuous exercise is restricted for 8 weeks as it may increase swelling, bleeding or duration to the body's natural healing process. These activities include weight lifting, sit-ups and running.

HOW DO I SLEEP AFTER SURGERY?

It is recommended to sleep with your knees slightly bent for as long as swelling persists. This will help swelling as well as help reduce the tension to your wound.

WHEN WILL I BE ABLE TO GO SWIMMING AGAIN?

It is recommended that no ocean or pool swims occur before 8 weeks of surgery due to infection as your wounds are not completely healed.

HAVE A QUESTION YOU CANNOT SEE HERE?

Our team of patient care advisors can assist with any questions you may have when considering surgery. You can send in an enquiry form online or call (07) 5598 0988 between 8am - 5pm Monday - Friday.

OUR SURGEON DR. MARK DOYLE

Dr. Mark Doyle is a fully qualified Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon and is a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (FRACS).



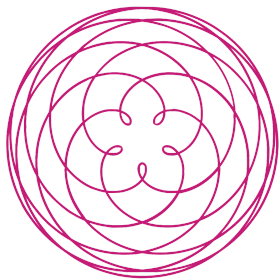
Dr. Mark Doyle and his team at Gold Coast Plastic Surgery focus on a core philosophy that everybody, regardless of their age, has the right to look and feel their best.

With over 30 years of experience to call upon, Dr. Doyle is one of Australia's finest and highly esteemed specialist plastic and reconstructive surgeons. He is driven by an intense passion for helping patients achieve a happier, more beautiful self, through advanced cosmetic treatments. His expertise in cosmetic surgery has been showcased through years of exceptional patient results.

One of the key factors behind Dr. Doyle's success has been his ability to combine experience with unparalleled compassion and understanding. Dr. Doyle has always maintained a firm commitment toward the provision of quality and optimal results. His depth of experience ensures patients receive detailed consultations, providing expected outcomes that are realistic and achievable. He regularly attends international meetings and workshops in Australia, America, and Europe to remain a leader in the latest advances and surgical techniques.

Dr. Doyle is a member of numerous professional organisations. These include the Australian Medical Association, The Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons, The Australasian Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, The International Society of Plastic Surgery, The American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, The American Society of Plastic Surgeons and the International Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery.





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YOUR NEXT STEPS?

Schedule a confidential consultation with Mark Doyle by phone or in person.



(07) 5598 0988



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