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CM04lite Abdominoplasty

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This document will give you information about an abdominoplasty. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

What is an abdominoplasty?

An abdominoplasty (or 'tummy tuck') is a cosmetic operation to improve the appearance of your abdomen. It may involve removing excess skin and fat and tightening the abdominal muscles.

Is an abdominoplasty suitable for me?

It is common for the skin of the abdomen not to shrink back after pregnancy or losing a lot of weight. You are most likely to benefit from an abdominoplasty if you are self-conscious about what your abdomen looks like.

Your surgeon will carry out a detailed assessment before deciding if surgery is suitable for you.

What are the benefits of surgery?

If the operation is successful, your abdomen should be firmer and have a better shape.

Are there any alternatives to an abdominoplasty?

Your appearance may improve if you follow an exercise programme.

If the problem is caused mainly by too much fat, it may be better to have only liposuction, where the fat is sucked out using a small tube.

What does the operation involve?

The operation is performed under a general anaesthetic and usually takes between two and five hours.

The following are the main techniques that your surgeon may use.

• Standard abdominoplasty

This technique is suitable if you have a lot of excess skin.

Your surgeon will make a curved cut from one hip to the other. They will remove any excess skin and fat. Your surgeon will then cut under the skin above your umbilicus (belly button), pulling it downwards and tightening it (see figure 1).

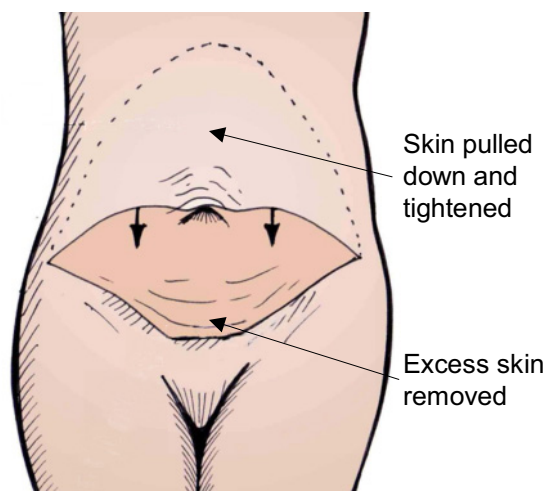


Figure 1

Standard abdominoplasty

Sometimes they will need to reconstruct your umbilicus and tighten the muscles of the abdominal wall.

• Fleur-de-lis abdominoplasty

This technique is suitable if you have a lot of excess skin hanging downwards and around your abdomen.

The procedure is similar to a standard abdominoplasty. Your surgeon will also tighten your waist.

• Mini-abdominoplasty

This technique is suitable if you have only a little excess skin.

Your surgeon will need to make only a small cut just above the pubic area to remove the excess skin.

• Lower bodylift or belt lipectomy

These techniques are suitable after significant weight loss.

Your surgeon will remove excess skin and fat from your sides, abdomen and lower back.

• Endoscopic abdominoplasty

This technique is suitable if you need only to have the muscles of your abdominal wall tightened. Your surgeon will make small cuts and use surgical instruments to tighten the muscles.

What complications can happen?

1 General complications

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Blood clots
- Unsightly scarring

2 Specific complications

- Developing a swelling
- Numbness or persistent pain
- Cosmetic problems

How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home after two to three days.

You should be able to return to work after the second week depending on your type of job. You should not have sex for the first three weeks.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, you should ask a member of the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

The results of an abdominoplasty improve gradually over the first six months. The best results for you will happen if you keep to a healthy weight and exercise regularly.

Summary

An abdominoplasty is a cosmetic operation to improve the appearance of your abdomen. It is suitable only for certain people. You should consider the options carefully and have realistic expectations about the results.

Acknowledgements

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This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.