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Abdominoplasty (Tummy Tuck) Patient Information Leaflet

What is an Abdominoplasty?

An abdominoplasty, commonly known as a tummy tuck, is a surgical procedure designed to improve the shape and contour of the abdomen.

It involves removal of excess skin, removal of excess fat (where necessary), and tightening of weakened or separated abdominal muscles.

This procedure is not intended for weight loss. It is designed to correct structural changes of the abdominal wall that cannot be improved with diet and exercise alone.

Why Might I Consider This Procedure?

You may be suitable for abdominoplasty if you have:

- Loose or excess skin following pregnancy
- Muscle separation (diastasis recti)
- Persistent lower abdominal skin folds
- Abdominal laxity after weight loss
- Unfavourable lower abdominal scarring (e.g. Caesarean scars)

Patients should ideally be near their goal weight and have completed childbearing before considering surgery.

What Does the Procedure Involve?

The standard operation includes:

1. An incision placed low on the abdomen, within the bikini line.
2. Elevation of the skin and fatty tissue.
3. Tightening of the abdominal muscles (if required).
4. Removal of excess skin.
5. Repositioning of the umbilicus to maintain natural proportions.

Refined surgical techniques are used to maintain a natural, youthful abdominal contour.

The operation typically takes 1½ to 2 hours.

Types of Abdominoplasty

Full Abdominoplasty: Required when there is significant excess skin and muscle laxity. Includes repositioning of the umbilicus.

Mini ('Melon-Slice') Abdominoplasty: Suitable for patients with minimal skin excess limited to the lower abdomen. Often combined with liposuction for contour improvement and is less invasive.

Hospital Stay & Recovery

- Hospital stay: approximately 2 days
- Initial recovery: 10–14 days
- Return to light activities: after 2 weeks
- Avoid strenuous exercise and sport: 4 weeks
- Scars mature over 6–12 months

All scars are permanent but are placed low enough to be concealed beneath underwear or swimwear.

Risks and Complications

Possible complications include:

- Fluid collection (seroma)
- Infection
- Delayed wound healing
- Minor soft tissue loss (rare)
- Bleeding
- Scarring
- Altered sensation in the abdominal skin

General surgical risks such as anaesthetic complications, deep vein thrombosis (DVT), or pulmonary embolism are uncommon but possible.

To reduce infection risk, you will be asked to clean your umbilicus with Betadine twice daily for one week prior to surgery.

Important Considerations

- This procedure does not replace weight loss.
- Minor abdominal looseness should not be treated surgically.
- A scar is unavoidable.
- Future pregnancies may affect results.
- Maintaining a stable weight is important for long-term outcomes.

Suitability

You may be a good candidate if you are in good general health, do not smoke (or are willing to stop), have realistic expectations, and are bothered by structural abdominal changes rather than weight alone.

A full consultation is required to assess suitability and develop an individualised treatment plan.