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Mommy Makeover Surgery - Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

A woman's body shape and silhouette naturally change with age. Pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, weight changes, and the physical demands of raising children may also affect the breasts, abdomen, waist, and other areas of the body.

These changes may include:

- Loss of breast volume
- Drooping or sagging breasts
- Changes in breast or nipple position
- Breast asymmetry
- Stretched or loose abdominal skin
- Separation or weakening of the abdominal muscles
- Stretch marks
- Localised fat deposits
- Changes in the waist and overall body contour
- Excess tissue above a Caesarean section scar

Healthy eating and regular exercise are important for general health and weight management. However, exercise cannot always correct loose skin, separated abdominal muscles, loss of breast volume, or changes in breast position.

A "mommy makeover" is not one specific operation. It is an individualised combination of procedures designed to address the areas that concern each patient and improve overall body shape and proportion.

What is a Mommy Makeover?

A mommy makeover combines two or more cosmetic or reconstructive procedures in a treatment plan tailored to the patient's body, wishes, and goals.

The operation commonly addresses the breasts, abdomen, waist, and surrounding areas.

Procedures may include:

- Breast uplift
- Breast augmentation with implants
- Breast uplift combined with augmentation
- Breast reduction
- Full tummy tuck
- Mini tummy tuck
- Abdominal muscle repair
- Liposuction
- Fat transfer or “fat grafting”
- Treatment of excess tissue around the waist, hips, back, or chest

Not every patient requires all these procedures. The combination is selected following a detailed consultation and examination.

Why is Mommy Makeover Surgery Performed?

Mommy makeover surgery may be considered for:

- Loss of breast fullness following pregnancy or breastfeeding
- Drooping or stretched breasts
- Breast asymmetry
- Breasts that feel disproportionately large or heavy
- Loose or excess abdominal skin
- Separation of the abdominal muscles
- A persistent abdominal bulge
- Excess tissue above a Caesarean section scar
- Localised fat that has not responded to healthy eating and exercise
- Loss of waist definition
- Changes following pregnancy, ageing, or significant weight loss
- A desire to improve overall body balance and proportion

A mommy makeover is intended to improve body contour. It is not a weight-loss procedure and cannot reproduce the exact body shape a patient had before pregnancy or ageing.

Planning the Procedure

A detailed consultation is required to assess:

- General health and medical history
- Previous pregnancies and Caesarean sections
- Previous operations and scars
- Breast size, shape, volume, and position
- Nipple and areola position
- Abdominal skin and fat distribution
- Abdominal muscle separation or weakness
- Waist, hip, flank, and back contour
- Skin quality and elasticity
- Body weight and weight stability
- Smoking, vaping, or nicotine use
- Current medication and supplements
- Risk of blood clots
- Future pregnancy plans
- The patient's concerns, priorities, and expectations

Photographs and measurements may be taken as part of the planning process.

The surgeon will determine which procedures can be safely combined. If the proposed operation would be too long or extensive, the procedures may be divided into two or more separate operations.

Timing of Surgery

Mommy makeover surgery is generally best considered when:

- Recovery from childbirth is complete
- Breastfeeding has finished and breast size has stabilised
- Body weight is healthy and stable
- No further pregnancies are planned
- The patient is in good general health
- Adequate help is available during recovery

A future pregnancy is still possible after surgery, but it may stretch the breasts, abdominal skin, and muscles again and may alter the surgical result.

Patients should not plan this surgery while they are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Surgical Options

Breast Uplift

A breast uplift, also known as mastopexy, removes excess skin and reshapes the breast. The nipple and areola may be moved to a higher position.

A breast uplift improves shape and position but does not necessarily increase breast volume.

Breast Augmentation

Breast augmentation uses implants to restore or increase breast volume and improve shape.

Implants may be placed beneath the breast tissue or beneath the chest muscle, depending on the patient's anatomy and the planned result.

Breast Uplift with Augmentation

A breast uplift may be combined with an implant when both lifting and additional volume are required.

In some patients, the uplift and augmentation may be performed as separate operations to improve safety or control the final result.

Breast Reduction

A breast reduction removes excess breast tissue, fat, and skin to create smaller, lighter, and better-positioned breasts.

Full Tummy Tuck

A full tummy tuck, also known as an abdominoplasty, removes excess skin and fat from the abdomen.

Separated or weakened abdominal muscles may be repaired, and the belly button is usually repositioned through a new opening in the skin.

A tummy tuck produces a permanent scar across the lower abdomen and a scar around the belly button.

Mini Tummy Tuck

A mini tummy tuck treats a smaller amount of loose skin below the belly button.

The incision is usually shorter than that of a full tummy tuck. The belly button is not usually repositioned.

A mini tummy tuck is suitable only for selected patients and does not correct significant looseness above the belly button.

Liposuction

Liposuction removes localised fat through small incisions using a narrow suction tube.

It may be used to improve the contour of the:

- Abdomen
- Waist
- Hips and flanks
- Back
- Thighs
- Upper arms
- Tissue surrounding the breasts

Liposuction is a body-contouring procedure and is not a substitute for weight loss. It does not reliably remove loose skin, stretch marks, or cellulite.

Fat Transfer

Fat removed by liposuction may be processed and transferred to another area to improve volume or contour.

Fat may be transferred to areas such as the breasts or selected contour irregularities. Some of the transferred fat may be absorbed by the body, and additional treatment may be required.

Surgical Incisions and Scars

The position and length of the incisions depend on the procedures performed.

Possible scars include:

- Around the areola
- Vertically from the areola to the breast fold
- Along the fold beneath the breast
- An anchor-shaped breast scar
- A horizontal scar across the lower abdomen
- A scar around the belly button
- Small scars from liposuction or fat transfer

All surgery produces permanent scars. Scars are usually red, dark, raised, or firm at first and generally soften and fade with time.

The position, colour, thickness, and final appearance of scars vary between individuals.

The Operation

Mommy makeover surgery is usually performed under general anaesthesia.

The duration of surgery depends on the number and complexity of the procedures performed. It may take several hours.

For safety reasons, the surgeon may recommend dividing a more extensive treatment plan into separate operations. This may be necessary if the proposed combination would result in an excessively long operation or recovery.

Hospital Stay

The required hospital stay depends on the procedures performed and the patient's health.

Some patients may be discharged on the day of surgery, while others may remain in hospital overnight or longer for monitoring.

The surgeon and anaesthetist will advise what is appropriate for the individual patient.

Sutures

Absorbable sutures are commonly used and usually do not require removal.

Any non-absorbable sutures or dressings will be removed or changed according to the post-operative plan.

Drains

Surgical drains may be placed beneath the breast or abdominal skin to remove blood and fluid from the operated areas.

If drains are used:

- They may remain in place when the patient leaves the hospital
- Instructions will be provided on caring for the drains
- The amount and appearance of the fluid may need to be recorded
- The drains will be removed when the drainage has reduced sufficiently
- Removal is usually performed during a follow-up appointment

Not every patient will require drains.

Recovery

Recovery varies according to the number and extent of the procedures performed.

Patients should expect swelling, bruising, tightness, discomfort, and temporary changes in sensation during the early recovery period.

General recovery guidance may include:

- Arrange for a responsible adult to assist during the early recovery period
- Arrange help with childcare, housework, meals, and transport
- Take approximately 2 weeks away from work, or longer if required
- Walk gently and regularly to support circulation
- Avoid strenuous activity and exercise for approximately 4–6 weeks or as directed
- Avoid lifting babies, children, shopping bags, and other heavy objects until cleared by the surgeon
- Wear a surgical support bra or compression garment as instructed
- Sleep in the recommended position
- Do not drive while taking sedating pain medication or until movement is comfortable and safe
- Attend all scheduled follow-up appointments

Patients undergoing a tummy tuck may initially walk in a slightly bent position because of abdominal tightness.

Recovery from combined surgery may be more demanding than recovery from a single procedure. Adequate practical support at home is essential.

The final result cannot be assessed immediately. Swelling may take several months to settle, and scars continue to mature for 12 months or longer.

Expected Results

The goals of mommy makeover surgery may include:

- Improved breast shape, volume, or position
- A flatter and firmer abdominal contour
- Repair of separated abdominal muscles
- Removal of loose or excess skin
- Improved waist definition
- Reduction of localised fat deposits
- Better balance between the breasts, abdomen, and surrounding areas
- Improved body proportion and clothing fit
- Greater comfort and confidence

Results vary between individuals. Perfect symmetry or a return to the exact appearance before pregnancy cannot be guaranteed.

Pregnancy, ageing, gravity, weight changes, and changes in skin elasticity may affect the result over time.

Breastfeeding and Future Pregnancy

The effect of breast surgery on breastfeeding depends on the procedures performed.

Breast reduction, uplift, or surgery involving the nipple and milk ducts may reduce the ability to breastfeed. Breast augmentation may also affect breastfeeding in some patients.

A future pregnancy may stretch the breasts, abdominal skin, and repaired abdominal muscles. This may reduce or reverse some of the improvements achieved through surgery.

For this reason, mommy makeover surgery is generally best considered after childbearing is complete.

Breast Screening

Breast surgery does not remove the need for routine breast screening.

Patients should inform the radiographer or healthcare professional about breast implants, fat transfer, or previous breast surgery before undergoing mammography or other breast imaging.

Risks and Possible Complications

All surgery carries some degree of risk. Combining procedures may increase the demands of the operation and recovery.

Possible complications may include:

- Bleeding
- Bruising and swelling
- Infection
- Delayed or poor wound healing
- Wound separation
- Fluid collection
- Blood collection beneath the skin
- Pain or prolonged discomfort

- Persistent swelling
- Thickened, raised, widened, darkened, or uneven scars
- Numbness or other changes in sensation
- Temporary or permanent loss of nipple, breast, or skin sensation
- Breast or body asymmetry
- Uneven contour
- Fat necrosis or firm areas beneath the skin
- Damage to deeper structures
- Loss of skin, fat, nipple, areola, or belly-button tissue
- Allergic reactions to medication, dressings, or surgical products
- Blood clots in the legs
- A blood clot travelling to the lungs
- Heart or lung complications
- Anaesthetic complications
- Persistent pain
- Unsatisfactory cosmetic result
- Need for revision surgery

The specific risks depend on the procedures performed, the duration of surgery, and the patient's individual health and risk factors.

Blood Clots

Tummy tuck surgery and longer combined procedures carry a risk of deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism.

Measures used to reduce this risk may include:

- Early mobilisation and regular walking
- Compression stockings
- Compression devices during or after surgery
- Blood-thinning medication where appropriate
- Avoiding dehydration
- Individual assessment of blood-clot risk

Calf pain, calf swelling, sudden chest pain, shortness of breath, coughing blood, faintness, or difficulty breathing requires urgent medical attention.

Tummy Tuck-Specific Risks

Additional risks associated with tummy tuck surgery may include:

- Delayed healing along the lower abdominal incision
- Fluid collection or seroma

- Loss of abdominal skin
- Loss or distortion of the belly button
- Uneven or raised scars
- Persistent numbness
- Abdominal tightness or prolonged discomfort
- Recurrent muscle separation or abdominal looseness
- “Dog ears” or fullness at the ends of the scar
- Need for additional contouring or scar revision

Implant-Related Risks

If breast implants are used, additional risks may include:

- Capsular contracture
- Implant rupture or deflation
- Implant displacement or rotation
- Implant rippling or visibility
- Breast pain
- Changes in breast or nipple sensation
- Infection around the implant
- Fluid collection around the implant
- Further surgery to remove, replace, or reposition the implant
- Breast implant-associated anaplastic large cell lymphoma (BIA-ALCL)
- Rare cancers reported in the scar capsule surrounding an implant

Breast implants are not lifetime devices. Additional surgery may be required in the future.

The benefits, limitations, expected monitoring, and risks of the proposed implants will be discussed before surgery.

Liposuction and Fat-Transfer Risks

Additional risks associated with liposuction or fat transfer may include:

- Uneven contour
- Rippling or loose skin
- Persistent swelling
- Fluid imbalance
- Fat necrosis
- Oil cysts
- Firm lumps or calcification
- Absorption of some of the transferred fat
- Under-correction or over-correction

- Need for further fat-transfer procedures
- Fat embolism or other serious complications

Fat transfer may improve volume and contour but cannot guarantee an exact or permanent volume increase.

Scarring and Wound Healing

Healing and scar formation vary between individuals.

The risk of delayed healing and other complications may be greater in patients who:

- Smoke, vape, or use nicotine
- Have diabetes
- Have poor circulation
- Have a higher body mass index
- Have significant medical conditions
- Take certain medicines or supplements
- Undergo longer or more extensive surgery

Smoking, vaping, and all nicotine use should be stopped according to the surgeon's instructions before and after surgery.

When to Seek Medical Advice

Contact the surgeon or treating facility promptly if you develop:

- Increasing redness, warmth, or swelling
- Worsening pain not controlled by prescribed medication
- Fever or chills
- Pus or unusual fluid from a wound
- Sudden swelling of a breast, the abdomen, or another treated area
- Persistent or heavy bleeding
- Opening of a wound
- Changes in the colour of the breast, nipple, areola, abdominal skin, or belly button
- Increasing abdominal swelling or tightness
- Persistent vomiting or inability to drink fluids
- A drain that suddenly stops draining or produces significantly more fluid
- A drain that becomes disconnected or falls out
- Calf pain or swelling
- Chest pain, shortness of breath, faintness, or difficulty breathing

Chest pain, sudden shortness of breath, fainting, or difficulty breathing requires urgent medical attention.

Important Considerations

Patients considering mommy makeover surgery should understand that:

- A mommy makeover is an individualised combination of procedures
- Not every patient requires the same procedures
- It is not a weight-loss operation
- A stable, healthy weight helps support a safer operation and longer-lasting result
- The procedures may need to be performed in stages
- Combined surgery may involve a longer and more demanding recovery
- Help with childcare and household responsibilities will be required
- Babies, children, and other heavy objects must not be lifted during early recovery
- All surgery produces permanent scars
- Perfect symmetry cannot be achieved or guaranteed
- Breastfeeding ability may be affected
- Breast implants are not lifetime devices
- Future pregnancy may alter the result
- Ageing, gravity, and weight changes will continue after surgery
- Revision surgery may be required in the future

Final Notes

Mommy makeover surgery can improve the shape and proportion of the breasts, abdomen, waist, and surrounding areas when carefully planned and performed.

The treatment is customised to each patient's anatomy, concerns, wishes, and safety requirements. It may include breast uplift, breast augmentation, breast reduction, full or mini tummy tuck, liposuction, fat transfer, or a combination of these procedures.

A detailed consultation is essential to determine which procedures are appropriate and whether they should be performed together or in separate stages.

The overall aim is to create a balanced, natural-looking body contour while maintaining realistic expectations regarding scars, recovery, risks, and long-term changes.