

Tummy Tuck - Abdominoplasty

Sometimes dieting and exercising are simply not enough to address waistline problems. In such cases, a patient may wish to consider a tummy tuck (or abdominoplasty). A tummy tuck is the surgical removal of excess skin or fatty deposits from the abdomen, along with the repositioning of abdomen muscles into a tighter formation. This bodily enhancement procedure is designed for those who wish to have a flatter and tighter stomach. It is most suited for women who have developed loose skin and fat 'tires' and lower tummy bulges in the lower tummy area following child birth. Age is generally not a barrier but Dr Gahankari advises younger mothers to wait for at least 6 to 12 months before seeking the procedure after the child birth. This interval allows the physiological effects of pregnancy to subside. For getting best results from this procedure, he also advises his patients to lose as much weight as possible before the surgery.

Reasons for Considering an Abdominoplasty

Inability to improve the abdomen area through diet and exercise .

Excessive accumulation of skin following weight loss.

Loss of skin elasticity or diastases (loose abdomen muscles) due to pregnancy.

The removal of unsightly skin and fat deposits as well as the proper alignment of the abdomen muscles to produce a more flattering look.

General Procedure

Abdominoplasty surgery lasts anywhere from one to five hours, depending on the desired look and the patient's unique physiology. To begin the procedure, This operation involves a long curvilinear incision at the lower aspect of the abdomen. The tummy skin-fat apron is then dissected in the upper abdomen and all skin under the umbilicus is removed. The abdomen muscle tissue is tightened to provide a firmly contoured stomach and well-defined waistline. Sometimes the procedure requires an additional incision around the navel in order to provide the best results. Dr Gahankari always uses Liposculpture with tummy-tuck to further contour the front and sides of tummy as well as part of the hip. This new technique greatly reduces the need for extensive undermining of the skin as well as reduces the length of the scar. It is needless to say that use of liposculpturing during tummy tuck helps achieving a very youthful contour of abdomen. In selected patients with minimal skin laxity, more conservative procedure called 'mini-abdominoplasty' can be performed. The drain tubes are usually removed in 2-3 days. Usually only dissolvable sutures are used.

Recovery Process

Generally, post-operative instructions call for plenty of rest and limited movement in order to speed up the healing process and recovery time. As the body recuperates, the patient can expect some swelling, pain, and discomfort. Medication can be prescribed to relieve any pain caused by the procedure. The stitches will be removed shortly after the surgery depending on the procedure(s) involved. Normal activities can generally be resumed within two weeks. Dr Gahankari advises a pressure garment or an abdominal binder as a support to be worn continuously for some weeks to support the repair of the muscle weakness, and also to help reduction of the swelling and bruising. It may take up to a year for the body to completely adapt to the new abdominal configuration. With proper diet and exercise the striking results of the surgery will be long lasting.

Like any other procedure, there are some documented risks of the tummy-tuck procedure. They include blood or fluid collection, fat or skin necrosis, asymmetry, umbilical slough and scar hypertrophy. Dr Gahankari will discuss the relevant risks with you during the consultation. Smoking markedly affects the circulation in the skin and hence increases the risk of skin necrosis or wound healing problems after the surgery. Dr. Gahankari advises cessation of smoking (even patches) at least 2-3 weeks before a planned operation.

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