

Abdominoplasty

Abdominoplasty, often called a "tummy tuck," is the fourth most popular surgery in the United States, with 185,335 performed last year. A tummy tuck, can remove excess folds of skin and tighten your abdominal muscles to create a lean, flat and more well-defined stomach. It can also diminish unsightly stretch marks. Because diet and exercise cannot remove excess skin, abdominoplasty is the perfect solution to tone and refine the abdomen. The effects of a tummy tuck can be long lasting, provided you exercise regularly, eat a sensible diet, and maintain a suitable weight level.

Dr. Butterfield takes the time during every pre-operative consultation in her Cincinnati office to learn what her patients want to achieve from a tummy tuck both for their bodies and for their self-confidence. By listening to what patients have to say and closely examining them rather than performing a one-size-fits-all procedure on every person, she provides patients with completely customized treatment that takes into account their specific goals.

Who is the best candidate for abdominoplasty?

Surgical techniques?

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Will insurance cover an abdominoplasty?

Who is the best candidate for abdominoplasty?

Men and women who have experienced dramatic weight loss, either through diet and exercise, or as a result of bariatric surgery, often have excess amounts of skin around the abdomen. Women can also experience this condition as a result of pregnancy, making the abdomen soft and flabby.

Good candidates include men and women who are in relatively good shape but have a large fat deposit in the abdominal wall or have loose abdominal skin. Abdominoplasty works best for people whose weight is fairly normal and stable. If you intend to lose more weight, you should consider postponing your tummy tuck until you've reached your target weight. A tummy tuck is not a weight-loss technique.

If your abdominal fullness and loose skin are confined to the area below the belly button, you may be a candidate for a mini-tummy tuck. However, if the fullness and skin laxity involve your entire abdomen, then a standard tummy tuck is most likely needed to help you achieve your desired results.

Surgical techniques?

1. Standard tummy tuck

During the procedure, an incision is made just above the pubic area from hip to hip, and the skin is separated from the abdominal muscles. If the abdominal muscles are loose, these muscles will be tightened during the procedure by uniting the two rectus abdominus muscles and stitching them together. Any excess skin between the pubic area and the belly button is then removed. To tighten the contour of the abdomen, Dr. Butterfield takes the skin on the upper part of the abdomen and stretches it downward. The belly button is then repositioned to its normal position. Lastly, the incisions are carefully stitched closed and a dressing is applied.

2. Mini-tummy tuck

The technique is similar to the traditional tummy tuck except that the skin is only separated from the muscles up to the level of the belly button. Less muscle tightening is performed, and the belly button does not have to be repositioned. Finally, the scar is much shorter.

3. Circumferential tummy tuck

Also called body lift, a circumferential tummy tuck extends the standard tummy tuck incisions around the entire trunk and just above the buttocks. It is used to lift the buttocks, outer thighs, and abdomen.

Recovery?

The length of time it takes to recuperate after a tummy tuck may vary depending on your individual health and whether or not muscle tightening was required. If no muscle work was done, most patients may return to work at 3 to 4 weeks. However, if muscle work was performed then the time of work would be closer to 4 to 6 weeks. After the procedure, a compression garment or girdle may be worn for 4 to 6 weeks to help decrease swelling. Heavy lifting or other vigorous activities (which would strain the abdominal muscles) should be restricted for 6 weeks. A light exercise program will help you heal better and can help avoid medical complications such as excess swelling and blood clotting. As with any scar, it may take more a year for the abdominal scar to look its best. In most cases the scar will fade to a pale and inconspicuous line.

Risks and long-term considerations?

Though rare, post-operative complications from surgery are possible. They may include infection, blood clots, and poor healing, which may require further surgery.

Patients who have had previous abdominal surgery should know that their old scars could be raised, stretched or generally more noticeable after the procedure. A scar revision procedure after abdominoplasty may minimize the appearance of an unsightly scar.

Will insurance cover an abdominoplasty?

Abdominoplasty is considered a cosmetic procedure and generally is not covered by insurance. In some instances, however, a patient may have a hernia and not just a spreading of the abdominal muscles. Insurance reimbursement may be available for that portion of the procedure.

If you have had bariatric surgery, and it was covered by your insurance carrier, you may be a candidate for a panniculectomy. This is a similar procedure to a tummy tuck, and may be covered by your insurance company. Many factors determine your eligibility for coverage, including the specific terms of your insurance policy. A letter of predetermination may be required by your insurance company prior to surgery. Please feel free to [contact the office](#) for more information or to schedule a consultation..