

CM04lite Abdominoplasty

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 only have 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, pulling it downwards and tightening it (see figure 1).

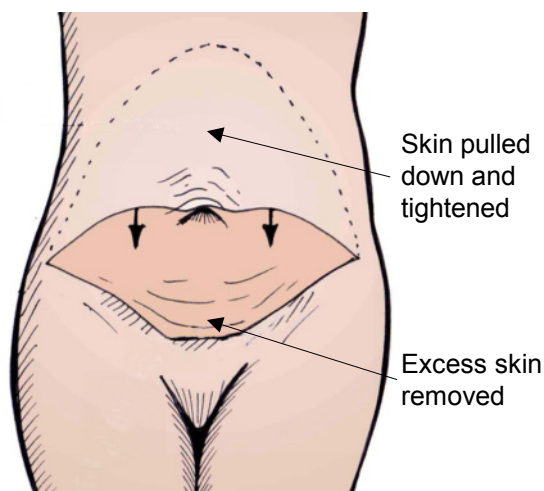


Figure 1

Standard abdominoplasty

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

• Mini-abdominoplasty

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

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

• Endoscopic abdominoplasty

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

What complications can happen?

1 General complications of any operation

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Infection in a surgical wound
- Blood clots
- Unsightly scarring

2 Specific complications of this operation

- 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 avoid 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 only suitable for certain people. You should consider the options carefully and have realistic expectations about the results.

Further information

- NHS smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169 and at www.gosmokefree.co.uk
- www.eatwell.gov.uk – for advice on maintaining a healthy weight
- www.eidoactive.co.uk – for information on how exercise can help you
- www.aboutmyhealth.org - for support and information you can trust
- NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 (0845 606 46 47 - textphone)

Acknowledgements

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