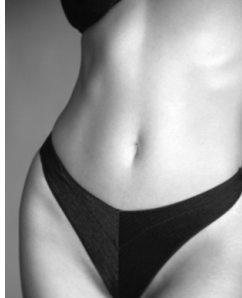


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## Abdominoplasty (Tummy Tuck)



Many factors can affect your abdomen. Childbirth can change the abdominal tissues to such an extent, that exercise cannot correct. Excess fat deposits can produce undesirable bulges or fullness, and loose skin following childbirth. Weight loss can also result in an

unattractive abdomen.

Abdominoplasty is a procedure, which improves the contour and appearance of the abdomen by contouring the underlying muscle, removing excess fat and loose skin.

During pregnancy significant stretching of your abdomen tissue occurs. After delivery, you can exercise to recover the tone in the muscles themselves, but the tissues, which interconnect the muscles, may have been stretched and do not respond to exercise. Looseness of the abdominal tissues can result in bulging of the lower abdomen, and may not always be correctable with exercise.

After significant weight loss your abdominal skin may become much looser, and may sometimes actually hang downward. Skin does not respond to any type of exercise, but loose skin can be removed during abdominoplasty (tummy tuck). Even in individuals who are not overweight, localized deposits of fat can occur in areas of the abdomen, producing undesirable contours. If fat deposits are the only contour problem, they may be correctable with Liposuction alone, but if stretched musculature or loose skin are present, an abdominoplasty is necessary to achieve the best contour.

Abdominoplasty does three things: it reshapes the underlying framework of the abdomen to improve shape and contour, it removes excess fat deposits which may be present, and it removes excess loose skin to improve the overall contour, appearance and shape of the abdomen. During your consultation, Dr. Gold will discuss with you each area of your abdomen of concern to you. He will explain specifically which of the components of abdominoplasty will be necessary to achieve the best contour.

### Limitations

Limitations and risks associated with abdominoplasty are very small. How much your abdomen can be reshaped depends on several factors. The quality of your tissue is very important, and a factor over which we have little control.

If you are significantly overweight, you'll get a much better correction if you achieve a more ideal weight before your abdominoplasty. There is a limit to the amount of fat that can be safely removed surgically during the procedure.

To reshape the underlying musculofascial framework and remove excess skin, incisions are necessary. Incisions are placed low on the abdomen, and their length depends on the amount of correction you require. In most cases, it is necessary to reposition or reshape your umbilicus (belly button). Dr. Gold will discuss the specifics of incisions during your consultation.

Any necessary incisions will produce scars. The quality of these scars depends on several factors, including your specific healing characteristics. You should think of scars as a trade-off for significant improvement in the shape of your abdomen.

Abdominoplasty cannot change the underlying skeleton and is limited in how much actual muscles can be reshaped. Dr. Gold will discuss any specific limitations during your consultation.

### Risks

The risks common to all surgical procedures such as bleeding, infection and scar tissue formation occur in a very small percentage of cases. We encourage you to discuss any of your concern during your consultation.

### The Operation

Incisions for abdominoplasty are placed low on your abdomen to allow them to be best concealed. The length of the incision depends on the degree of looseness in your skin and how much will need to be removed as the upper skin is pulled down to improve the contour. Dr. Gold will discuss your preferences and specific ways in which he can minimize the length of your incisions

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### How Abdominoplasty Is Done

The skin and fat are first lifted off the underlying musculature of the abdomen. Dr. Gold makes very precise measurements and markings before beginning any reshaping so as to most accurately control the final shape. If the fascia is stretched, he will tighten the tissues by placing multiple rows of sutures. In some cases, the muscles themselves may be repositioned for best correction. In essence, the underlying framework of the abdomen is reshaped.

Next, excess fat is removed using suction or direct removal techniques. This reduces any excess thickness in the soft tissue to get the best redraping over your new abdominal framework.

The skin is then pulled downward to tighten it and any excess tissue is removed below. Depending on the degree of looseness of skin and the amount of skin removed, it may be necessary to reposition the umbilicus (belly button).

### Recovery

All of your incisions will be carefully closed with stitches placed beneath the skin, so there's no chance of your having "railroad track" type marks but rather very fine line scars. The sutures will dissolve by on their own.

To minimize fluid collection and swelling and improve your comfort in the treated areas, we'll ask you to wear an elastic garment (which we provide) for two weeks or longer after surgery, depending on the areas and extent of your procedure.

Following abdominoplasty procedures, most patients have mild to moderate discomfort the first 48-72 hours, which decreases rapidly thereafter. The extent of discomfort depends largely on the extent of surgery required to reshape your abdomen. We'll prescribe medication for your discomfort as necessary.

Your abdomen will feel tighter as the result of its new, tighter shape. The feeling of tightness will decrease over 1-3 weeks as swelling decreases and the tissues become accustomed to their new shape.

It's important to be up and about the day following your procedure. How much activity will depend upon the specific procedure that was required to reshape your abdomen.

You will be able to shower within two or three days following surgery.

### The Stages Of Recovery

Our patients usually want to know about four stages of recovery: length of surgery time, time for swelling or bruising to resolve, ability to return to work or social activity, and resuming full aerobic or strenuous exercise.

#### Surgery time:

An abdominoplasty (tummy tuck) is usually performed in the office as an out patient surgical procedure. Dr. Gold has a fully State Accredited surgical suite in his office for your convenience.

**Bruising and swelling resolve:** 21-30 days

**Return to work, social activity:** 5-14 days

(The length of recovery depends upon the extent of the procedure).

**Aerobic or strenuous activity:** 3-6 weeks

We encourage you to return to full normal activity very rapidly. To assure the best result and prevent damaging the reshaped areas, Dr. Gold will tailor an individual program depending upon your specific procedure.