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# **Abdominoplasty: The Tummy Tuck**

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Abdominoplasty, or a "tummy tuck," is a cosmetic surgery designed to correct a protruding abdomen that may result from weak abdominal muscles, weight gain, or pregnancy. These conditions may not respond well to diet or exercise if the skin and underlying muscles have been stretched, which makes this surgery possibly a necessity for someone who wants a decent shape back.

With a tummy tuck, the abdominal wall muscles are tightened and excess fatty tissue and skin are removed to improve the body's shape and appearance. The goal is a narrower, flatter abdomen. Realistic expectations are important, and contrary to some beliefs, a tummy tuck is not a substitute for weight loss. Dieters should hit their ideal weight before going in for this procedure, and a woman who plans to become pregnant again in the future should wait until she's finished having new children, otherwise this surgery may just be a waste of money.

Antibiotics will be prescribed prior to surgery to prevent infection. To minimize the possibility of excess bleeding, you will need to avoid taking drugs containing aspirin. You will also be advised to bathe with an antiseptic soap for several days prior to surgery. Abdominoplasty is performed using general anesthesia. Some doctors may give you medication beforehand to help you feel relaxed. Surgeries generally take anywhere from 2-5 hours, depending on the patient's health and condition. Recovery time also varies greatly.

Some swelling and discomfort is normal after surgery, and general pain pills will help to get through this more comfortable. The doctor will provide the instructions you need for changing bandages, showering, and general care. As with any other medical surgery, it is always important to follow the doctor's orders. The scars take time to fade, but they will fade over time. This is the cosmetic surgery that may take the most recovery time, but to someone who has been plagued by a "fat gut" despite doing everything right know how rewarding this procedure can be for them. A good diet and normal exercise routine after the surgery (and recovery time) will be of great benefit.

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