

Aspire Procedural Information Guide Abdominoplasty (Tummy Tuck)

Welcome to your Aspire Experience. This is your informed decision informational packet. It will give you information concerning your Aspire surgical experience from the start to the completion. It is important that you read this information carefully and completely.

Excess skin and tissue in your abdomen can defeat even the best diet and exercise programs. Whether your sagging skin is hereditary or caused by weight loss or pregnancy, your protruding abdomen can be corrected by a tummy tuck. Also known as abdominoplasty, a tummy tuck removes loose, sagging skin and tissue from your abdomen. The underlying muscles also can be tightened and stitched together. The procedure may even help hide stretch marks below your bellybutton.

If you have reached your ideal weight and plan to maintain your weight through a healthy lifestyle, a tummy tuck can help you achieve the proportionate figure that you seek.

Consultation

If you would like to learn more about a tummy tuck, the first step is a consultation with Dr. Lee. He will take the time to get to know you and to learn why you are considering a tummy tuck. Dr. Lee will examine your abdomen to assess your skin tone, the amount of fat in your abdomen and the condition of your abdominal muscles. He will take measurements as well as photos for your medical records.

Dr. Lee will also take your medical history. Be prepared to talk about any medical conditions, previous surgeries, current medications and allergies, and whether you've had any previous abdominal surgeries, which can affect your outcome. As a cosmetic procedure, a tummy tuck is not generally covered by health insurance. If you are found to have a hernia, however, some insurance coverage may be available. Dr. Lee's team will help you address this issue.

Before Your Tummy Tuck

Knowing what to do and what to expect before your surgery will make for the best possible outcome. Before your tummy tuck, you may be asked to undergo lab tests or a medical evaluation. You will need to avoid aspirin and anti-inflammatory drugs 10 days before surgery, which can increase bleeding. If you smoke, you will need to stop well in advance of your surgery.

Your surgery will be performed at the fully accredited Southwest Surgical Suites or another accredited facility. They will contact you prior to your procedural date to review medical history and instructions. Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your procedure for a morning surgery; including water, mints, chewing gum, and vitamins. For an afternoon procedure, obtain specific instructions during your pre-operative call. Having an empty stomach is extremely important for your safety.

Be sure to arrange for someone to drive you home after surgery and to stay with you at least the first night following surgery.



Your Tummy Tuck Procedure

Upon arrival at the surgical facility and after registration, you will be escorted to the preoperative area where you will be prepared for surgery. One guest may be with you until you go into the operating room. Both your physician and your anesthesiologist will meet with you prior to your procedure.

There are several techniques for a tummy tuck. Dr. Lee will choose the right procedure based on your personal situation.

In most cases, the incision is made just above your pubic area extending toward your hips. The length of the incision depends on the amount of skin and tissue to be removed. The incision often can be placed below the level of your bathing suit, though it's not always possible. If you have a lot of excess skin near your bellybutton, you may need another incision there as well. If you've had a C-section, Dr. Lee may be able to place your incision in the same area.

If your abdominal muscles have separated, Dr. Lee will pull them together and hold them in place with sutures. If you have stretch marks, some of this skin may be removed, and remaining stretch marks may flatten out a bit, though you cannot achieve a major difference in stretch marks with a tummy tuck.

If you have a great deal of abdominal fat, Dr. Lee may recommend combining your tummy tuck with liposuction to remove that excess fat. You may have small tubes in your abdomen to drain excess fluid while you heal.

After Your Tummy Tuck

When your tummy tuck is complete, you'll be taken to recovery, where you will be carefully monitored. Although the time varies, most patients are discharged one to two hours after the procedure. Southwest Surgical Suites also offers overnight stays if ordered by the physician and appropriate for the procedure performed.

You will need a caregiver to drive you home and to stay with you for the first 24 hours to watch for signs of complications.

Your abdomen will be bandaged to minimize swelling. You will be encouraged to get up and about for short periods the day after surgery. You likely will not be able to stand completely straight for the first few days, and you should not sit for long periods of time. You may need to sleep on your back for the first few weeks with a pillow under your knees. You'll also need to avoid straining, bending and lifting to prevent bleeding or increased swelling.

If you have drains, they will be removed within a week after surgery. Your stitches will be removed in stages at follow-up visits over the course of the next two weeks, and you may need to wear a support garment during this time.

After a week or two, you should be able to stand up straight. Depending on your job, you should be able to return to work between one and three weeks. You can return to your normal activities after several weeks as well.

Your swelling and bruising may not subside completely for several months after your tummy tuck. You also may experience some numbness in your surgical area for several months. Your incisions may appear red or pink during this time, and they may look worse before they look better. Overall, your results will continue to improve as the first few months pass.



Important Facts About Breast Augmentation Risks and Complications

Thousands of men and women undergo a tummy tuck every year, and few experience significant complications. But every plastic surgery has its risks. The risks involved with a tummy tuck include:

- Unattractive scarring
- Bleeding
- Infection
- Fluid accumulation
- Poor wound healing
- Skin loss
- Blood clots
- Numbness or other changes in skin sensation
- Anesthesia risks
- Skin discoloration and/or prolonged swelling
- Fatty tissue found deep in the skin might die (fat necrosis)
- Major wound separation
- Asymmetry
- Recurrent looseness of skin
- Pain, which may persist
- Deep vein thrombosis, cardiac and pulmonary complications
- Persistent swelling in the legs
- Nerve damage
- Possibility of revisional surgery
- Fluid that accumulates under the skin
- Tissue loss along the incision. This complication, which delays healing and prolongs recovery, is more common in patients who smoke or have medical conditions such as diabetes.

Dr. Lee will discuss these risks with you during your consultation. Please be sure to ask him about any questions or concerns that you might have.

The Results of Your Tummy Tuck

A tummy tuck can finally eliminate that stubborn protruding or sagging skin and tissue that just won't respond to diet and exercise. Unless your weight changes significantly or you become pregnant, your results should be long-lasting.

With a more firm and flat abdomen, you'll find that clothes fit better. You also will enjoy the boost in self-confidence that comes from a youthful, proportionate figure.

The key to a truly successful tummy tuck is maintaining an open line of communication with Dr. Lee. He and his team are eager to respond to your questions and can help provide skin care to maintain and enhance your results—they are your partners in achieving the results that you seek.

Sources: The American Society of Plastic Surgeons; The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery