

## **Dr. Ashraf Abolfotooh Khalil**

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# **Tummy Tuck**

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## What is Tummy Tuck?

Tummy tuck – or Abdominoplasty - is the process of reshaping and restoring the aesthetic shape of the abdominal area, which may be affected due to pregnancy, childbirth, aging and significant fluctuations in weight. This is done by body sculpting, liposuction, and getting rid of excess abdominal wall sagging.

Sometimes a tummy tuck is done in conjunction with other body-contouring cosmetic procedures, such as breast surgery. If you have had abdominal fat removed (liposuction), you may decide to have a tummy tuck because liposuction removes tissues and fat under the skin, but not the excess skin.

Check the illustrative video [here](#)<sup>1</sup>.

## Before the Surgery... Preparation and Expectations

It is important to know the following before deciding to undergo a tummy tuck surgery:

- A tummy tuck cannot substitute for weight loss or a proper exercise program.
- Results of a tummy tuck are known to be permanent, however, this cannot be guaranteed in case of remarkable weight fluctuations. Accordingly, those who are in the process of substantially losing weight or women who are planning for pregnancy will be rather advised to postpone a tummy tuck.
- Stretch marks cannot be corrected by a tummy tuck. Yet, these may be relatively improved/removed if located on the excess skin that will be removed.
- Tummy tuck surgery isn't for everyone. Our medical team may advise against tummy tuck surgery if you:
  - Smoke heavily;
  - Had a previous abdominal surgery which caused significant scar tissue;
  - Plan to lose a significant amount of weight;
  - Consider pregnancy in the future;
  - Have a severe chronic medical condition such as heart disease or diabetes
  - If your BMI is too high

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<sup>1</sup> <https://bit.ly/2Q5PR7J>

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Before the surgery, a detailed interview is conducted with our medical team covering the following:

- Review of your medical history and current health situation including a complete physical examination and results of any laboratory tests, such as blood tests.
- Discuss the details of your weight gain and weight loss.
- It might be advised to do abdominal ultrasound to make sure there are no hernias in the abdominal wall.
- An overview of the surgical intervention needed and possible changes, risk, recovery stages as well as the expected results.
- Photographs of the abdomen from different angles and close-up photos of some features.
- Determine where your procedure will be performed and the date of operation.

### Important Instructions

- Avoid taking aspirin, vitamins, anti-inflammatory drugs and herbal supplements, one week before the surgery, as they can increase bleeding.
- Take only those medications approved or prescribed by your surgeon.
- Stop smoking 3 weeks before the surgery.
- Contraception, such as tablets and injections, must be stopped for 3 weeks before the operation.
- Arrange for someone to drive you home after the surgery.
- Arrange for resting at home for at least one week after the surgery.

### During the Surgery

- **Anesthesia:** Type of anesthesia will be discussed and determined with our medical team before the surgery. Local or general anesthesia is applied according to your situation and the required intervention.
- **Procedure Steps:** A horizontal or elliptical shape incision is made to remove most of the excess skin and fat in the area between the pubic hairline and bellybutton. The connective tissue (fascia) resting on the abdominal muscles is then tightened with permanent sutures. The shape and length of the incision is determined by the amount of excess skin removed and type of procedure you receive. The incision is then sewn above the pubic hairline, leaving a scar along the natural crease of the bikini line. Position of the skin around the navel is also corrected, and the navel is removed through a small incision and sutured in its normal position.

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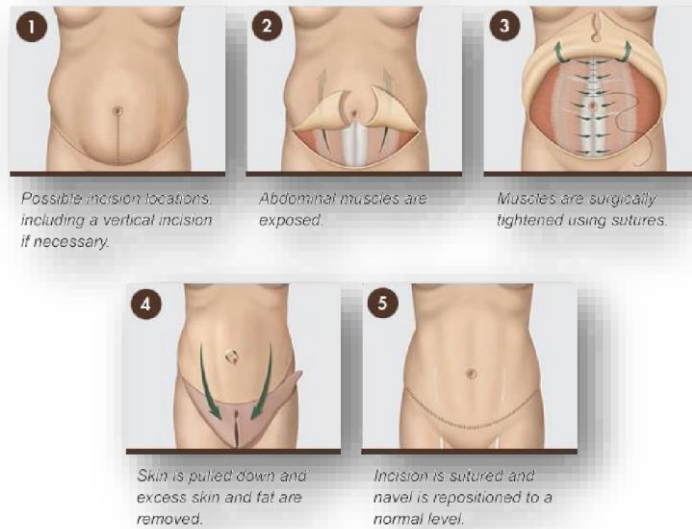
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- The surgery lasts for 3-4 hours depending on the surgical details and patient's situation.

### After the Surgery

- In most cases, you can leave the hospital later the same day of the operation, or else as needed.
- The abdominal incision and bellybutton will be covered with surgical dressing. Small tubes might be placed along the incision site to drain any excess blood or fluid.
- Do not worry if fluids and solutions come out. These fluids may be in large amount and bloody, which is normal and will decrease gradually within 3 days.
- Expect some pain, swelling and bruising after the procedure. Medication will be prescribed to help control the pain and antibiotics to reduce the risk of infection.
- It is recommended to walk as early as the first day after a tummy tuck to help prevent the formation of blood clots.
- You usually need to wear tight compression garments, which help reduce swelling, for a few weeks. You may need to wait one week at least before returning to work and a few weeks before resuming your normal activities — including exercise.
- During this time, expect some contour irregularities as the remaining fat settles into position.

### Classic Tummy Tuck



### Variations of Tummy Tuck Incisions



## Post-Procedure Precautions

1. You will need to wear a corset for 4-8 weeks (upon the doctor's advice). It should be tight in order to ensure best result of contouring and avoid fluid accumulation. An abdominal belt might be needed over the corset for 1- 2 months.
2. The corset will be removed for the first time on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day after the surgery. Then it can be removed for 15 minutes daily to shower.
3. You will be instructed on how to care for the surgical site and drains.
4. You might need to replace the corset with a smaller size after a while (after the swelling decreases).
5. It is advised to walk (a minimum of 30 steps daily inside the room), to avoid immobility risks. Walking shall be slowly with your back bent for the first week after surgery.
6. It is important to watch out for not standing up suddenly from a sleeping position. Yet, sit on the bed firstly, then stand up gradually and get out of bed while bending your back and knees.
7. For the first 6 weeks, you'll need to be careful when moving around. Avoid positions that strain your incision line — such as quickly bending at the waist — to prevent reopening or stretching the wound.
8. It is highly recommended to perform massage (manual lymphatic drainage massage) on the abdomen, as early as 3 days postoperative, for better results and faster recovery. You can do it yourself at home or ask our clinic for support. Check massage video [here](#)<sup>2</sup>.
9. Avoid vigorous or aerobic activity or sports for 6 weeks after the surgery.
10. Stop smoking. Smoking slows the healing process and may make you more likely to get an infection.
11. Eat high-fiber foods, such as fruits and vegetables, to avoid constipation. Constipation can cause you to strain, putting pressure on the surgery site.
12. Limit your dietary salt intake to help faster swelling recovery.

## Recovery and Results

- Your improved body contour will be apparent when the swelling and fluid retention commonly experienced following liposuction subside. It takes a few weeks for the swelling recovery and several months to observe a leaner appearance on the treated area.
- It is natural for the skin to lose some firmness with aging, but tummy tuck results are generally long lasting as long as you maintain your weight.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://youtu.be/SXQ4zppUcAI>

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- If you gain weight after your tummy tuck surgery, your fat distribution may change. For example, you may accumulate fat around your abdomen regardless of what areas were originally treated.

## Follow-up

In the first month after the surgery, follow-up is done by visiting the clinic once or twice a week. In the following month, a visit is made every two weeks. Then monthly follow-up visit (once a month) during the next 6-12 months.

## Risk

The decision to have plastic surgery is extremely personal. You will have to decide if the benefits will achieve your goals and if the risks and potential complications of Tummy Tuck and liposuction are acceptable.

Our medical team will explain in detail the risks associated with surgery. As with any surgical procedure, you will be asked to sign consent forms to ensure that you fully understand the procedure and any risks or potential complications. Photographs are taken before and after the surgery and for different periods to follow up the progress achieved.

As with all major surgeries, a tummy tuck risk includes bleeding, infection and adverse reactions to anesthesia. Most of the complications of a tummy tuck are dealt with through careful follow-up with our medical team. Generally, possible complications include:

- Fluid accumulation (seroma), swelling and/or bruising
- Skin discoloration and/or irregular pigmentation
- Poor wound healing
- Unexpected / unfavorable scarring
- Tissue damage
- Numbness or other changes in skin sensation

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## Medication

R/Tavanic 500mg	One tablet daily for 5 days
R/Ketolac SR	One tablet every 12 hours - after meals – till pain is gone
R/Panadol 500mg	Two tablets every 8 hours
R/Neurontin 300mg	One tablet before sleeping for 5 days
R/Alphintern	Two tablets every 8 hours – half an hour before meals – for 2-3 weeks
R/Controloc 40mg	One tablet 30 minutes before breakfast for 10 days

Cited in:

- American Society of Plastic Surgeons: <https://www.plasticsurgery.org>
- Mayo Clinic: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/>

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