

BODY CONTOURING SURGERY:

Abdominoplasty (Tummy Tuck)

What to Expect

OPERATION DURATION

This operation is performed under general anaesthetic and usually takes 3-4 hours.

HOSPITAL STAY

You will be in the hospital for 2-3 days, depending on your recovery. Everyone is different, and your recovery will be tailored to you.

Dr Taylor will not be in to visit you every day whilst you are in the hospital. He will phone your nurses for daily updates and provide over-the-phone instructions. He will come in to see you if you have any issues.

What Complications May Occur After This Procedure?

GENERAL POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS OF ANY PROCEDURE

- Bleeding during or after surgery
- Infection at the surgical site
- Allergic reaction to equipment, materials or medication
- Blood clot in your leg or lungs
- Chest infection
- Poor scarring - hypertrophic or keloid
- Acute kidney injury

SPECIFIC POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS OF THIS PROCEDURE

- Wound healing problems - wound has delayed healing and may open up (dehiscence)
- Lump developing under your wound caused by blood collecting (haematoma). This may require further surgery
- Lump developing under your wound caused by fluid collecting (seroma). This may require draining
- Fat necrosis, when there is not enough blood being supplied to an area of fat, and the fat becomes hard
- Skin necrosis, where some of the skin at the edge of your wound dies, leaving a black area
- Numbness of the surface of the skin on the abdomen (in most cases, this is temporary and improves over a few months)

CONSEQUENCES OF THIS PROCEDURE

- Discomfort, swelling and bruising (temporary)
- Scarring - abdominal from hip to hip.

How to Prepare for Your Procedure

HOW LONG SHOULD YOU BOOK OFF WORK

This depends on your profession - If you work in an office/non-strenuous job 3-4 weeks. However, if you have a physically demanding job 6-10 weeks, depending on the type of work, your specific requirements will be discussed with you individually.

Please email admin@drduncantaylor.com.au if you require a medical certificate.

SUPPORT GARMENT

You must purchase an abdominal garment (binder) and high-waisted compression shorts before your surgery.

Please bring these with you on the day of surgery.

Wear your garment 24/7 for 4 weeks (including in the hospital). You can remove the garment to shower).

After 4 weeks, the abdominal garment can be removed at night but remain on during the day for support and transition back to normal activity and light exercise. The garment is no longer required 6 weeks post-surgery.

FASTING

You are required to fast for General Anaesthesia. You cannot have any food or fluids (including lollies, chewing gum) 6 hours prior to your surgery.

You can have some sips of water only up to 2 hours before your surgery and then nothing after this time.

If you take regular medication, please check with our nurse to see if you should be taking your medication in the lead-up to/on the day of your surgery. Some medications should be withheld.

PRE-OP WASH

Please purchase a pre-op chlorhexidine wash from the pharmacy. Use this whilst showering, the night before and the morning of your surgery.

MORNING OF SURGERY

You will be asked to arrive at the hospital approximately 2 hours prior to your surgery start time. Our Practice Manager will email you your admission information, including time and where to go, 1-2 weeks before your surgery date.

Dr Taylor will see you in the pre-operative area before you go into theatre. He will mark out the site for your surgery. This process must be completed whilst you are awake, as he requires you to be standing.

DRAINS

In some instances you will have drains inserted into your abdomen during your operation. These drains are usually removed prior to your discharge from the hospital. The need for drains is assessed during the operation and is patient specific.

You may have an indwelling catheter inserted to drain your bladder during surgery. This will be removed once you are mobilising well, usually the next day.

Post-Operative Instructions

ACTIVITY

You will first mobilise in a bent position due to the tightness of your abdomen. You will slowly be able to straighten up over the first 1 - 3 weeks (depending on how tight your abdomen closure is).

In the initial 3 weeks following your surgery, we would like you to rest as much as possible to assist with your wound healing. Pottering around the house is fine, though do not start going for walks, doing housework, etc., during this time.

After 3 weeks you can begin doing short (30 mins) slow walks and slowly increase from 3 - 6 weeks post-op.

Please do not do any physical activity or heavy lifting over 5 kgs for 4-6 weeks. No rigorous activities for 8 weeks, including tennis, horse riding, golf or aerobics.

You can drive after 2-4 weeks, depending on your recovery and when you feel strong enough to. You should also refer to your car insurance policy for individual guidelines.

PAIN RELIEF

You should not be in significant pain after your surgery. You will be prescribed regular pain relief by your anaesthetist, for on the ward post surgery. If you have pain on top of this, you should ask for additional pain medication, which will be prescribed on your drug chart should you need it.

You will not be discharged from the hospital until your pain is well managed on oral medications. Please take paracetamol regularly and your stronger pain relief, if required. If you have severe pain that is not responding to the pain relief, please phone our nurse during office hours.

Please do not put ice packs or heat packs on your wounds.

Do not take aspirin.

ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES

You will be prescribed some anti-inflammatories whilst you are in hospital, and you will also be discharged with some. Please take the entire course, even if you are not in pain. Please take this medication as prescribed on the box by your anaesthetist.

ANTIBIOTICS

You may be given a 5 days course of oral antibiotics. Depending on how long you remain in the hospital, you may be discharged home with some remaining antibiotics. Please take the full course.

BLEEDING

If the wound starts to bleed, please apply firm pressure for 15 minutes. If a dressing is in place, please do this over the top of the dressing (do not remove the dressing).

This should control the bleeding. However, if it is not easily controlled or does not subside, please phone our nurse specialist during working hours, go to an after-hours GP clinic or visit an emergency department.

INFECTION

If your wound becomes hot, swollen, oozes pus, or you are spiking temperatures, the wound may be infected. Please phone our nurse immediately within business hours or attend your GP, after-hours GP or Emergency.

REMOVAL OF SUTURES

Sutures used during these procedures do not require removing and they will dissolve on their own.

WOUND & DRESSING CARE

Your wounds will be covered in one of two ways:

Surgical tape and glue (Dermabond Prineo):

This dressing is waterproof, so you may shower as normal and gently pat the area dry. It will usually begin to peel off on its own after about 3–4 weeks. At that stage, you can carefully remove the remaining dressing yourself.

Prevena VAC (negative pressure dressing):

This dressing stays in place for 2 weeks and will be removed in the clinic by our nurse. It is connected to a small portable device that you'll need to carry with you and recharge overnight. Once removed, your wound will usually be ready to be left uncovered.

The type of dressing used will depend on your individual needs.

Do not immerse the wound in water, i.e. swimming or bathing for 6 weeks, or until the wound is completely healed.

Bruising takes around 2-3 weeks to resolve, and swelling can take up to 3-6 months to resolve completely.

MASSAGING FOR SCAR REDUCTION

Commence massaging your scars once your dressings are removed, and wounds have healed – approximately 3 weeks post-op.

It is recommended that you massage your scars with a good moisturiser (e.g. Sorbolene or QV) or Bio-Oil for 2 minutes, twice daily. Wipe off any excess product, then apply either:

- A silicone gel (e.g. Strataderm), which dries to form a protective film over the scar, or
- Silicone tape.

Continue this treatment for 3–6 months.

SLEEP

Initially, you will need to sleep in a slightly bent position while your abdomen stretches out. This will predominantly be whilst you are in hospital, and your bed will be positioned to assist this. Most patients are still tight and in a bent position when they are discharged from the hospital. We suggest you prop your head up on multiple pillows and a pillow under your knees until you have stretched out. Do not sleep on your stomach for 6 - 8 weeks.

If you are concerned at all or have any questions, please phone our clinic to speak with our practice nurse.

Follow up appointments:

- 2 and 3 week post surgery for wound checks and