Abdominoplasty

Patient Information

Dr. Jane Paterson

COSMETIC PLASTIC SURGEON

ABOUT DR JANE

Dr Jane is highly experienced in Abdominoplasty (Tummy Tuck) surgery.

An Abdominoplasty is designed for women who are physically affected by the size of their lower abdomen. It is not a weight loss procedure; rather it is a shape changing procedure. Patients need to be in the right frame of mind to consider surgery and expect a reasonable outcome.

The following information has been created on behalf of Dr Jane as a general guide to assist her patients.

Although the specific nature of the surgery may vary with each individual and is dependent on the exact circumstances of each patient, the information outlined below describes what you would reasonably expect to follow. It is intended to provide a broad overview of the important considerations related to the decision to have an abdominoplasty.

Patients are encouraged to further discuss this information along with any specific questions or concerns with Dr Jane during their consultation.

Abdominoplasty surgery, often referred to as a Tummy Tuck, is a surgical procedure involving removal of excess fatty tissue and skin from the abdomen. This may also include repairing muscle separation, to assist with core strength. Abdominoplasty surgery is not a weight loss solution and should be considered only when diet and exercise no longer achieve results.

COMMON REASONS WHY PEOPLE CONSIDER HAVING ABDOMINOPLASTY

Why do patients choose to undergo Abdominoplasty?

There are many reason women choose to undergo an Abdominoplasty (tummy tuck) procedure include:

- Pregnancy or having lost a significant amount of weight
- Would like a defined waist
- Wanting to fit into clothes of their choice
- Remove excess skin and fat from areas resistant to exercise and diet

During your consultation, Dr Paterson will discuss with you the various options available to you. Every woman is different and has unique expectations, and we feel confident that following this discussion you will arrive at a decision that is right for you.

Who should/should not consider Abdominoplasty?

The Abdominoplasty is a major surgery and is not something to be taken lightly. The best candidates for an Abdominoplasty procedure are in good physical condition with pockets of fat or loose skin that haven't responded well to diet and exercise. More mature and slightly overweight people whose skin has lost some of its elasticity can be helped dramatically by this procedure. Abdominoplasty can also be useful for women with stretched skin and muscles from pregnancy.

Any decision to undergo plastic surgery needs to be for the right reasons. Patients should avoid this type of surgery as a response to another individual's preference; plastic surgery is about your body and your needs. Dr Jane will always discuss this in detail with you as well as provide you with many before and after images so you can have realistic expectations.

It is important to understand all aspects of your treatment including associated risks and possible complications regarding the procedure. Smoking, several other medical conditions and being overweight can make surgery unsafe; however, these and other risks will be discussed with you at the time of your consultation.

An abdomen that is too large for the body frame presents issues including but not limited to:

- Changes to lifestyle and social life
- Dermatitis under the skin folds or fatty tissue folds
- Poor posture from trying to hide the size of the abdomen
- Exercise and sporting activities are more difficult, which can then increase the likelihood of weight problem.

Excess skin can be a significant burden for many women, and most patients find amazing relief from an abdominoplasty as it can result in a tremendous improvement in daily comfort.

Patients experience a lighter sensation as excess skin and tissue is removed, long lasting results and an improved ability to exercise – all these factors contributing to a increased quality of life.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER BEFORE UNDERGOING AN ABDOMINOPLASTY

If you plan to get pregnant after the procedure

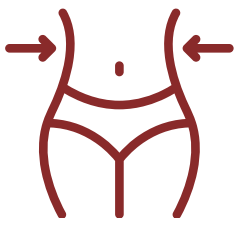
It is recommended that patients have no desire for any further children. Changes in the abdomen during pregnancy or significant weight loss/gain can alter the outcomes of a previous tummy tuck surgery

Are you generally fit and healthy with a stable weight?

The Abdominoplasty procedure is NOT designed to achieve weight loss but rather to re-contour your figure. Significant weight loss or gain later on in life can affect the results of your abdominoplasty. Your overall health will also contribute to the success and recovery of your procedure.

Have you truly considered all the risks?

Just like with any surgery, Abdominoplasty involves risk. Your surgeon will go through all the risks with you well before your procedure; however, ensure you do thorough research and seek a second opinion.



Do you have reasonable expectations?

You need to be in the right frame of mind to consider surgery and also expect a reasonable outcome. While your surgeon will always strive to achieve the results you want, it is unreasonable to expect the same results as another person.

HOW IS AN ABDOMINOPLASTY PERFORMED:

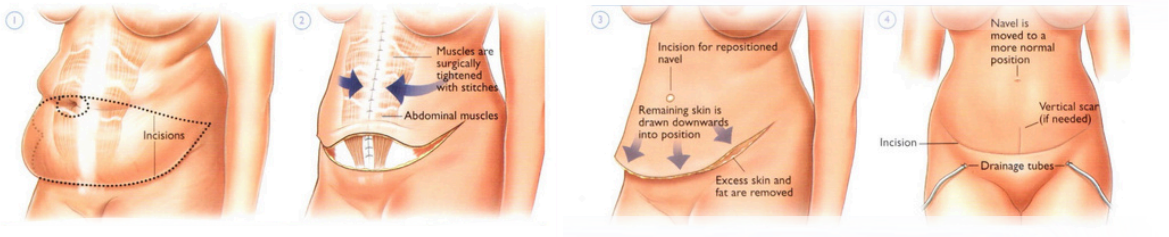
Abdominoplasty is performed under a general anaesthesia and requires a hospital stay of between one and three nights. All types of surgery result in some form of scarring. The extent and placement of these scars will be determined on an individual basis, depending on the amount of enhancement required, and the quality of the tissue and skin that remains.

Before deciding to have Abdominoplasty surgery, Dr Paterson will ensure that:

- You have a stable, healthy weight
- You are otherwise fit and healthy
- If you are a smoker, you are seriously considering quitting
- You have finished developing (patients need to be at least 18 years old)

Dr Paterson will explain all the main considerations and limitations, and you will be fully informed of all of the costs associated with your surgery, including the cost of your specialist anaesthetist, the fully accredited hospital, and all of your post-operative care and appointments.

Abdominoplasty (Tummy Tuck)



1. Incisions are made, usually from hip to hip, and just above the public region. Plastic surgeons will, where possible, make the main incision under the "bikini line" so the scar is as concealed as possible.
2. The skin and underlying fat are lifted free of the abdominal muscles. The muscles are surgically tightened, in some cases, to strengthen the abdomen.
3. Excess abdominal skin and fat are removed. Another incision is then made to reposition the belly button.
4. The belly button is stitched into its new position. The incision is closed with stitches. A drain tube may sometimes be used to drain fluid from the area.

Abdominoplasty surgery takes approximately 2 hours, and you will need to be in hospital for three nights. Our patients all receive a post-operative pack containing scar therapy products, which promote and encourage healthy healing of the scar.

Procedure facts

Surgery duration: Two-three hours

A wedge of tissue (skin and fat) is excised from the lower abdomen from just above the pubic hairline to about the level of the umbilicus (belly button). The abdominal wall muscles are also tightened at this time.

The final incision is placed just above the pubic hairline and extends from hip to hip. The resulting scar is similar to a longer caesarean section type scar with a second small incision around the belly button.

Post-operative care & review

Dr Jane Paterson will review you frequently after your procedure.

Approximately one week after surgery: At this stage, Dr Paterson will make sure that you are well, and the wounds are healing nicely.

2. Six weeks post-surgery: At this time, you will have a better idea of what the final result from surgery will be like. If all is progressing well, Dr Paterson will give you the all clear to resume normal activities.

3. Four-six months post-surgery: At this stage, Dr Paterson will make sure that you are well and that you are progressing through the recovery towards the final results.

4. 12 months post-surgery: You should now have completely healed and will be able to show Dr Paterson your final results. After this, Dr Paterson will review you every twelve months at no extra charge to ensure your ongoing safety.

If there are any concerns, you will be seen more frequently.

No surgery is risk free

All surgery is a balance between realistic surgical goals and knowledge of possible risks and complications. Risks are minimised by careful patient selection and planning, high standards of surgical training, meticulous surgical technique and vigilant postoperative care. Small, less serious issues are common, and every effort is made to resolve them quickly. All surgery has risks, and it is important to be aware of the potential risks and complications.

RISKS TO CONSIDER

General Anaesthesia: In healthy people, general anaesthesia is very safe with modern techniques, however there are an array of potential complications that can occur during or after general anaesthesia. These can be as minor as bruising at the cannula site or muscle soreness and as major as an allergic reaction to the anaesthetic, which can be life threatening. Common complications are nausea, vomiting and sore throats. Dr Paterson will give you the details of your anaesthetist before surgery to discuss any specific concerns.

Infection in the wound: If this does occur; it can usually be cleared up with antibiotic tablets.

Scars: Typically, the resulting scars are at their thickest and reddest at 6-10 weeks after surgery. Scars continue to mature and improve for up to 18 months after surgery. Scar management advice will be discussed in your follow-up visit with Dr Paterson to assist in achieving the goal of a thin, barely noticeable scar.
Note: The resulting scar is across the lower abdomen from hip to hip and designed to be hidden by most underwear/bathers as well as a small scar around the umbilicus (belly button).

Asymmetry: The scars may be slightly different on your right compared to left side.
Wound separation/delayed healing: This is much more common in smokers or if there is an infection.

Wound healing issues: Stretch marks may not all be removed, or new ones may be created. Gathers in the wound are often present at either end. These settle over several weeks to months in the most cases but sometimes may need a small revision often under local anaesthetic. Initially, there is almost always some contour issues or puckers. These settle down in most cases over several weeks.

Numbness: Almost always occurs in the skin of the abdomen but usually settles down over the next few weeks to months.

Seroma: Clear like fluid that can collect following surgery. Usually, it settles down with no intervention but if persistent or large may require drainage in the rooms (sometimes on several occasions) or even a drain tube to be inserted.

Bleeding/Hematoma: This may need a return to the operating theatre to evacuate a blood clot. This can impact on wound healing or skin survival.

Smoking: As cigarette smoke constricts the small blood vessels within the tissue, smokers have a higher incidence of wound healing problems. In particular, smokers are much more likely to develop wound breakdown and infection. For this reason, it is important to stop smoking 2 weeks prior to surgery and for 6 weeks post-surgery.

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT): Following surgery, there is a risk that blood may accumulate in the veins of the lower legs. Post-surgery, these clots can dislodge from the vein walls of the calves and travel to the lungs, resulting in a pulmonary embolism.

Disclaimer: Individual results will vary from patient to patient according to factors including but not limited to; genetics, environment and lifestyle factors. All surgery carries possible risk and recovery times. Before proceeding with surgery, it is advisable to seek a second opinion from an appropriately qualified medical practitioner such as a Plastic Surgeon. All before and after patient photos are of real patients who have had their surgery performed by Dr Jane Paterson. These patients have given their consent to share their photos.

Plastic Surgeon is a regulated term that can only be used by surgeons who have completed speciality training within plastic surgery and are Fellows of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (FRACS).

Dr Jane Paterson (MED0001141949) is a registered medical practitioner with specialist registration in Plastic Surgery.