

Abdominoplasty/ Tummy Tuck Information Sheet

You will soon be having an abdominoplasty or tummy tuck by A/Prof Damian Marucci.

Before the Surgery

- You will be told when to be at the hospital and when to stop eating and drinking a few days before the surgery
- Make sure you have stopped all blood thinners in advance of the surgery

The Surgery Itself

- On the day of the surgery, you will be checked into the hospital. You will meet the anaesthetist.
- A/Prof Marucci will draw the surgical plan on you before you go into the operating theatre. You will then go into the operating theatre for the procedure
- The surgery is performed under general anaesthesia (you'll be completely asleep). Antibiotics will be started. A catheter will be placed in your bladder to measure your urine output – and this means you don't to get out of bed or use a pan the night of the surgery. Drips will be placed in veins to give you fluid.
- A/Prof Marucci will then perform the abdominoplasty/tummy tuck. The procedure begins with liposuction to the flanks, tummy and upper pubic area. Liposuction involves putting in fluid containing local anaesthetic and adrenaline and then suctioning out fat and fluid using narrow long cannulas. Usually around a litre of fat and fluid is removed this way. Then the operating part of the procedure starts
- An incision is made around the belly button, leaving attached to the abdominal wall where it is. All the skin and fat below the belly button down to the lower abdominal fold is removed. The remaining upper abdominal skin and fat is lifted up off the muscles in the midline until the sternum is reached. At this point, the muscles of the abdominal wall are tightened if needed. Local anaesthetic is injected into the muscles. Drains are placed in the lower part of the wound. The upper tummy skin remaining is stretched down over where the skin and fat have been removed and a new hole is made for the belly button (the bed will be flexed or jack-knifed to make this stretching possible). Dissolving stitches are used to close the lower abdominal wound – which goes from hip to hip. Non dissolving stitches are commonly used around the belly button and they come out 2 weeks later.
- A plastic dressing called Comfeel is placed on the lower tummy wound and a large band-aid is placed over the belly button. A binder is placed around your tummy – this is like a stretchy corset which does up in front with Velcro. You will then go to the ward after you have fully woken up from surgery.

After the surgery

- The local anaesthetic used during the surgery will last for many hours. After that, you will be given stronger painkillers either through the drip or in tablet form.
- The catheter in your bladder is removed the morning after surgery, and you can start moving around and go to the toilet as normal.
- The drains stay in until they are draining less than 30 mls for 2 days in a row. Most patients stay in hospital for 1 or 2 days and may go home with one or two drains (which are usually removed a few days later).
- You can get out of bed and have a shower even with the drains in the day after surgery. You can use soap shampoo as normal.
- The binder is worn day and night for 4 weeks. You can take it off to shower and to clean it in the washer/dryer. It gives support and decreases swelling, so the more you wear it the better.
- Once you go home, plan on taking it easy for a few weeks. You can potter around at home. Most patients are driving within 2 weeks after surgery. You can't lift anything heavier than 3 liters of milk for 4 weeks after the surgery. No swimming and no exercise for at least 4 weeks. Nothing "for" exercise (you can walk – but not for exercise). You should be fine for light work after 2 - 3 weeks.
- It takes a few months for everything to settle down after surgery. The key thing is: any problems, any concerns, contact A/Prof Marucci via the rooms.