



Michael D.
Graham.CO.UK
CONSULTANT BREAST ONCO-PLASTIC AND COSMETIC SURGEON

Abdominoplasty (Tummy Tuck)

Abdominoplasty is the surgical removal of excess skin and the underlying fat.

As a result of pregnancy or weight loss the abdominal skin may become stretched and saggy often resulting in an overhang. Due to lack of skin elasticity or stretch marks the skin may never return to its initial state despite dieting and exercise and the only way to resolve the problem is an Abdominoplasty, which is the surgical removal of excess skin and the underlying fat. Tightening of the abdominal muscles may be performed at the same time.

The Consultation

Your consultation with Mr Graham will be held at The Cosmetic Surgery Centre for the South West at the Winterbourne hospital in Dorchester. He does not use nurse advisers or counsellors, as he believes that all consultations should be held with the surgeon who will be performing the operation and is able to answer any questions you may have.

You are encouraged to bring your partner or a friend to the consultation. At the initial consultation you will be asked your reasons for wishing to undergo an Abdominoplasty and what your expectations are from surgery. He will ask questions about your medical history, whether you are taking any medication or have any drug allergies. You will also be asked about your smoking habits.

Mr Graham will examine your abdomen taking note of any overhang which may exist, the position and extent of any stretch marks, assess the skin elasticity, any muscular weakness and the thickness of the fat layer beneath the skin.

Mr Graham will discuss details of the procedure including the position and extent of scars, what to expect during your hospital stay and during your recuperation period. He will also discuss the potential risks and complications associated with Abdominoplasty surgery.

You will of course be given an opportunity to ask any questions you may have relating to the surgery.



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The Operation

You will be admitted to The Cosmetic Surgery Centre for The South West at the Winterbourne Hospital in Dorchester on the day of surgery. The room facilities will be demonstrated to you and your nurse will ask you some basic questions about your health and fit anti-embolism socks.

Mr Graham will see you before the operation, draw some line markings on you and take your pre-operative photograph following which you will be asked to sign the consent form, which gives him your permission to operate. You will have the opportunity to meet the Consultant Anaesthetist who will explain to you what the anaesthetic involves.

Some patients may have experienced nausea after previous anaesthetics. If this is the case you should inform the Anaesthetist who will give you medication to reduce the risk of nausea.

You will next see your Anaesthetist in theatre. The anaesthetic is given and you will drift off to sleep. While asleep you may be given an antibiotic to reduce the risk of infection and a blood thinning injection to reduce the risk of thrombosis. An Abdominoplasty procedure involves removing the excess skin with the underlying fat from the level of the umbilicus down to the pubis.

If there is some underlying muscular weakness this may be repaired at the same time following which the skin above the umbilicus is stretched and pulled down over the umbilicus and sutured to the skin at the level of the pubis. A new hole is made for the umbilicus to come through.

The operation lasts approximately two hours and you will wake in the recovery bay before being taken back to your room. Local anaesthetic may have been injected during the operation and you will be given painkillers to keep you comfortable. Small plastic drainage tubes will be inserted to remove any fluid and a pressure garment similar to a pair of cycling shorts will be worn over the dressings.

Depending on the amount of fluid the drains will be removed in two to five days. Most women stay in hospital one or two nights after an Abdominoplasty procedure. You will be given painkillers and discharge advice to take home with you and a contact telephone number should you have any questions.

Mr Graham will also give you your next out patient check up appointment.



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The Recovery Period

Following discharge you should take it easy at home but do not take to your bed. You should keep active with regular short strolls around the house or garden. You will have some discomfort for a few days and should take the painkillers given to you on discharge.

You may remove the pressure garment daily and flannel wash. The dressings applied in theatre should be kept dry. At your first outpatient appointment (usually one week later) the dressings will be changed. The scar will be taped to provide support while it is healing. All sutures used are dissolvable and will gradually dissolve over several months.

You may slowly resume normal activities as you feel comfortable to do so. Driving is usually possible after one week and depending on your occupation, return to work in two weeks. You may swim after four weeks. Strenuous gym work is usually not possible for six weeks although exercises involving the upper body may be started within a few days of surgery. Flying is discouraged for the first two weeks following surgery.

Risks and Complications

Abdominoplasty surgery as with all surgery carries certain risks. There are general risks associated with anaesthesia such as chest infections and thrombosis and those specifically related to Abdominoplasty surgery.

Some bruising is not unusual and settles rapidly. Bleeding may occur requiring a return to theatre to cauterise the bleeding vessel. Slow wound healing and infection may occur especially in heavy smokers, diabetics and those overweight. This may require antibiotics and regular dressings over several weeks and it is advisable to stop smoking prior to surgery.

Clear fluid (seroma) or blood may collect under the scar and need aspirating on several occasions in outpatients using a fine needle. Areas of numbness are common in the initial post operative period following an Abdominoplasty and this usually recovers over a period of several months. Scars usually fade well and become hardly noticeable but some people can have problems with red, raised and lumpy scars.

The ends of the Abdominoplasty scar may be slightly raised which can be dealt with under local anaesthetic if problematical. Occasionally people also benefit from liposuction of the abdomen or hips at a later date to optimise the end result.





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The Winterbourne Hospital

Mr Graham holds consultations and operates at The Cosmetic Surgery Centre for the South West at the Winterbourne hospital in Dorchester, one of the leading cosmetic surgery centres in the UK.

The hospital, which has recently undergone a major refurbishment, has two new state of the art operating theatres, twenty nine private en suite bedrooms, eight consulting rooms, resident medical officer and as is of course fully registered with the National Care Standards Commission.

Mr Graham lives locally and has been operating at The Winterbourne hospital for more than nine years and during that time has developed an expert operating and outpatient team in cosmetic surgery.

Mr. Michael D. Graham

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If you would like to arrange a consultation, please fill in the online form at www.michaeldgraham.co.uk or, contact us by telephone at **(01305) 267687**. Arranging a medical consultation does not obligate you to anything other than attending the appointment. There is no obligation to proceed with treatment. This is entirely a matter for your decision, after the surgeon has decided on the feasibility and accepted you as suitable.



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