



## Care after abdominoplasty surgery (tummy tuck)

### Part 3 of 3

This leaflet explains what to expect after a tummy tuck. **It is important that you read this information carefully and completely. Please initial each page** to show that you have read it. For information on the surgery, and the risks and complications of a tummy tuck, please see parts 1 and 2.

### What to expect after the operation

Tummy tucks are usually carried out under a general anaesthetic (so you would be asleep). The operation usually takes about three hours, and you would usually spend up to three days in hospital.

When you wake up from your operation you may have a drip to give you fluid while you are not drinking. You might be given antibiotics to keep the wound clean. Also, you may have drainage tubes in your lower tummy to drain away any fluid or blood. These tubes will be taken out when the fluid or blood has stopped draining, usually before you go home.

Your tummy will feel tight and sore. Simple painkillers should be enough to keep you comfortable.

### Dressings

You will have some dressings on your tummy. You may need to wear a well-fitting support garment, usually for weeks after the operation. You will be asked to keep your knees and hips bent whenever possible to take the strain off your stitches.

### Recovery

You will be out of bed on the same day as your surgery, and doing light activities after two weeks. You should be back to normal exercise in six weeks.

While you are in hospital, you will be given blood-thinning injections, and support stockings, to reduce the risk of a clot in the leg (DVT) or the lung (PE).

Avoid strenuous activity for 10 to 12 weeks. Most patients take up to four weeks off work after the operation, depending on their job. Your tummy will be sore and swollen for weeks to months after the operation. Do not lift heavy things for several weeks, and avoid sex for at least three weeks. With all activities, start gently.

Do not drive until you feel safe and are comfortable wearing a seatbelt. Check your insurance documents if you are not sure.

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Please bring this form with you on the day of surgery.

You can get further information and copies of this form from the website at [www.baaps.org.uk](http://www.baaps.org.uk)

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### **Seeing the results**

At first your tummy skin may seem too tight. This usually settles down within six weeks of the surgery. Most patients are pleased with the final result, but some find their new shape difficult to get used to. This may happen to you.

You may have more or less sensation in the skin on your tummy, and this can change over time.

### **Your aftercare**

To protect your body, and get the best result, look after yourself.

Avoid vigorous activities after your operation.

Protect your wounds as you are told to.

Putting on weight or being pregnant will affect the results.

Maintain a healthy weight and level of exercise.

### **What to look out for**

Bleeding after surgery can cause swelling, a change in colour, and pain, usually just on one side. The signs of an infection are pain, redness, swelling and pus in the wound, and you may also have a temperature.

A blood clot in the leg can cause swelling and pain in the calf. If the clot goes to the lung, you might be breathless or have pain in your chest.

If the wound is not healing well, it may be sore and weep.

If you have any worries after your operation, speak to a doctor or go to A&E.

### **Important contact details for your surgery**

#### **Disclaimer**

This document is designed to give you useful information. It is not advice on your specific needs and circumstances. It does not replace the need for you to have a thorough consultation, so you should get advice from a suitably qualified medical practitioner. We – The BAAPS and BAPRAS – have no liability for any decision you make about the surgery you decide to have.

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