

# Post-baby tummy tuck

SYDNEY PLASTIC SURGEON  
**DR POURIA MORADI** SAYS  
ABDOMINOPLASTY OFFERS AN  
EFFECTIVE OPTION IN TONING  
AND TIGHTENING THE  
TUMMY AFTER CHILDBIRTH.  
CAITLIN BISHOP REPORTS.

Sometimes no matter the dedication, consistency and motivation behind your fitness regime, abdominal fat can be frustratingly difficult to conquer. Particularly after childbirth, which causes the abdominal muscles to separate, that desirable toned, tight and flat abdomen can prove elusive.

Sydney plastic surgeon Dr Pouria Moradi says a 'tummy tuck', or abdominoplasty, is a viable option in removing excess skin and fat from the lower abdomen, and tightening the muscles within the stomach wall.

'Patients who have lost considerable weight or are finding it difficult to flatten their stomach after childbirth are ideal candidates for a tummy tuck procedure,' Dr Moradi explains. 'The operation should not be seen as an alternative to weight loss, but it does create a smoother and firmer abdominal contour.'

Dr Moradi performs two types of abdominoplasty procedures. A standard tummy tuck where the incision, and final scar, stems from hip to hip just above the pubic region. During this procedure, the abdominal skin is lifted up to expose the underlying musculature. The abdominal muscles are then repositioned with sutures, and the excess skin and fat of the lower abdomen is removed. The standard abdominoplasty operation involves the recreation

of the belly button, which is placed in a more youthful and aesthetically pleasing position.

Alternatively, for those patients not needing such an extensive reduction, the 'mini' abdominoplasty can be a more suitable option. In this, both the incision and extent of dissection is smaller than the standard procedure, but the excess skin and fat are still effectively removed.

☞ Patients who have lost a lot of weight or are finding it difficult to flatten their stomach after childbirth are ideal candidates ☜

'Some patients, such as thin women who have had multiple births, are more suited to a mini abdominoplasty,' Dr Moradi explains. 'The belly button does not need repositioning and the resulting scar is similar to a caesarean scar – it does not extend to the hip bones.'

In both procedures, Dr Moradi also typically performs liposuction to smooth the abdominal contour and better refine the shape of the hips and flanks.

A tummy tuck can also be combined with other procedures, for example, breast augmentation, labiaplasty, or a thigh or arm lift for all-over rejuvenation.

Prior to surgery, Dr Moradi conducts a lengthy consultation with all his patients to discuss their expectations and concerns going into surgery. 'The first step is establishing a great rapport between the patient and surgeon and to start an honest and open dialogue about the goals of the patient,' he says. 'Ultimately, the final goal is to create a more proportionate silhouette and I often use 3D digital imaging tools to provide a realistic picture of what the final result will be.'

This consultation process is followed by a pre-surgery visit, where Dr Moradi explains how the procedure is performed and prepares the patient for the post-operative recovery period.

'Abdominoplasty is performed under general anaesthetic and typically involves a one to three night hospital stay,' he explains. 'Usually, patients are off work for two to four weeks following surgery.'

It is common to experience a sensation of tightness following abdominoplasty, which can sometimes cause difficulty in bending and other movements. Dr Moradi explains patients should avoid heavy lifting during the recovery period, but can resume regular activity around six weeks post-operatively.

'Patients won't be able to lift anything heavy for the first six weeks after surgery, but then they can return to normal activities, completely unrestricted,' Dr Moradi explains. 'Most women actually feel stronger when they go to the gym after a tummy tuck, because the core muscles have been tightened.'

Like any surgery, abdominoplasty comes with certain risks and complications, which means it is especially important for patients to choose a skilled surgeon with extensive experience.

According to Dr Moradi, detailed pre-operative assessment, thorough surgical planning and diligent post-operative care can go great lengths in ensuring a smooth and successful recovery, with optimum results.

'I devise a pre-operative plan for each of my patients to optimise their health and healing capacity,' he explains. 'We look at what medications or over-the-counter vitamins they are taking, and get their blood pressure under control if necessary. It's also essential patients stop smoking well in advance of their operation.'

Following surgery, compression body garments are worn during recovery to accelerate healing and help re-drape the skin more evenly over the body's newly defined contours. **csbm**

## CASE STUDY

This patient, a 55-year-old mother of three, approached Dr Moradi hoping to flatten her stomach. No matter how much core strengthening work she did, she couldn't tighten her stomach because of the muscle separation resulting from childbirth.

She underwent a mini-abdominoplasty with liposuction, and the incision only added a small extension to her previous caesarean scar. She was able to return home two days after the operation.

The post-operative photographs show a flattened stomach, even when the patient is leaning all the way forward. Notably, she reports increased core strength during exercise after her tummy tuck operation.

## BEFORES AND AFTERS



BEFORE

AFTER abdominoplasty by Dr Moradi

Photos taken from 3D images of real before and after photos.



BEFORE

AFTER abdominoplasty by Dr Moradi