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**ABDOMINOPLASTY (TUMMY TUCK) INFORMATION****General Information:**

A tummy tuck or abdominoplasty is the most significant procedure regularly performed for cosmetic concerns. It involves significant understanding of the goals, recovery, risks and complications before scheduling.

An abdominoplasty procedure is performed by making an incision of variable length in the low bikini area in order to redrape the skin and tighten the underlying musculature of the abdomen. The rectus abdominus muscle is the muscle of primary importance in this procedure. It most commonly becomes separated at the midline due to pregnancy or significant weight gain. This muscle does not grow back to where it was when you were young. One of the primary goals of a tummy tuck is to reposition the underlying muscles in order for them to heal, and create the tighter, flatter abdomen of youth. The second major goal of abdominoplasty is to remove loose or redundant skin of the abdomen. The incision length is determined by the need to remove skin and is thus determined on an individual basis. The repositioning of the belly button is often necessary in major cases. Minor cases may not require this repositioning.

**Recovery:**

This procedure often takes one week before a patient can regain a majority of their daily living skills. Some patients prefer to take three weeks away from more strenuous jobs to allow for the most ideal recovery. Pain is mild to moderate and often requires narcotic pain medication for 5-7 days, during which you cannot drive your automobile or operate heavy machinery. A soft rubber drain is commonly used during the first 3-7 days after the procedure to reduce trapped fluid accumulation. This is not painful to remove. Bruising commonly settles to the lowest point treated which is most often the groin and becomes more noticeable for 8- 10 days before fading to yellow. Infection risk is one out of 150 patients, but is most often determined by past history of medical complications such as diabetes or smoking. Antibiotics are mandatory for 5 days. An abdominal binder or compressive garment must be worn full time for a period of 3 weeks. There are some rare exceptions to this rule and will be determined individually.

**Risks and complications:**

The most common issue is the length and location of the incision. This will be placed 4 cm above the lowest point of the groin. This is the lowest, most concealed placement possible without increasing risks of loss of groin sensitivity. Pain, swelling, bruising, infection are all common risks of all types of surgery. Wound complications such as stitch abscesses, dehiscence or skin breakdown have been reported. Abdominoplasty is always performed with liposuction in order to refine the flanks and lateral sweep of the abdomen. These procedures have been associated with an elevated risk of deep venous thrombosis (blood clots in the venous system). During the procedure, all available methods to reduce this risk will be taken with the placement of leg compression devices and use of blood thinner if required. The exclusive use of deep intravenous sedation in combination with local numbing solution has the lowest risk of any anesthetic technique available. Immediately after the surgery patients will be assisted to the bathroom and will begin walking on their own. This significantly reduces the risk of developing these complications. Women on birth control medications, a past history of thrombosis, smokers or poor wound healers must consider the risks of surgery seriously prior to scheduling.

The final result of the surgery will not be complete for greater than one month and often improves for a total of three to six months. Use this time and recovery to redouble your efforts at maintaining a healthy lifestyle with appropriate diet and exercise. This will further enhance your improved shape, elevate your mood and make for long-term health and satisfaction.

More specific information and individual detail for your particular goals will be discussed during the consultation. A thorough review of your medical history and any necessary laboratory studies will be requested at that time. An opportunity to answer all of your questions will be provided. In addition, I can always be reached via the telephone.

Thank you for choosing our office for your care.

Sincerely,  
Jagdev S. Heir, M.D., D.M.D.