

Have you lost a bundle of weight, only to find yourself dealing with skin folds like a Shar-pei? Are you finished having children and finding it difficult to regain your pre-pregnancy shape?

An abdominoplasty (also known as a tummy tuck) may be the correct procedure to help regain that body shape that you're aiming for. A 'full' abdominoplasty procedure addresses your abdominal wall muscle tightness, fat thickness and excess skin and is designed to help you gain the abdominal shape you've been working towards.

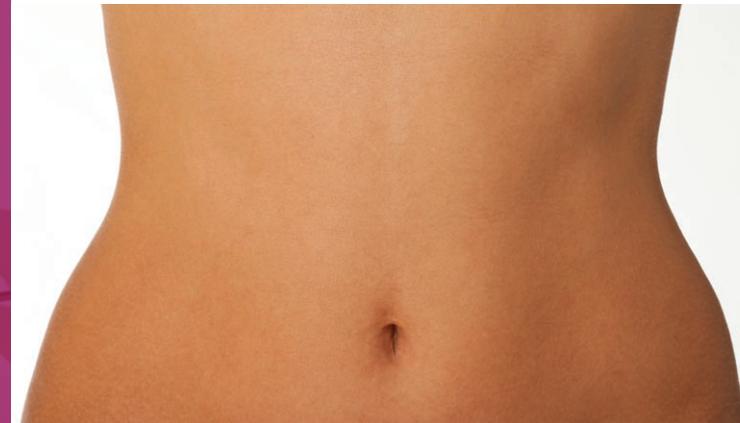
Located opposite Norwest Private Hospital in the Norwest Business Park, Norwest Plastic & Cosmetic Surgery is only 15 minutes from Parramatta and 45 minutes from the Sydney CBD.

The location has easy access to the M2, linking the M7, M4 & M5 motorways.



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A patient guide to understanding Abdominoplasty



Thinking of an Abdominoplasty? A short guide to assist you in making your decisions.



What is involved in an abdominoplasty or tummy tuck?

There are many variants of abdominoplasty procedure, and most have valid uses depending on your muscle tone, fat disposition and pre-existing scars. The most common variation is performed in the following steps:

- Liposuction of the side walls of the abdomen to assist with shaping.
- An incision along the top of the underpants line.
- Undermining of the front of the abdomen to expose the rectus (6 pack) muscles.
- Suturing the rectus muscles together in the midline.
- Assessment of redundant skin and excision of only as much as will allow safe closure.
- Recreating the umbilicus (belly button).
- Closing the new abdomen with a fine line scar that will be hidden under most underpants.

Three components critically affect your abdominal shape - muscle tone, fat disposition and skin excess. Depending on the extent of each of these, some of the surgical steps can be modified or completely eliminated to provide you with a tailored procedure that addresses your body shape without unnecessary risks.

What are my options?

Abdominoplasty is a procedure that commonly is matched with other procedures to allow the greatest impact on body shape in a single procedure. Other areas of liposuction, or breast or chest wall shaping are commonly performed at the same time as an abdominoplasty.

When should I get my abdominoplasty?

Weight loss patients should wait until they are at, or almost at, their goal weight. Stability at this weight for at least 6 months helps ensure that your result is more permanent. Abdominoplasty is a great procedure for abdominal shaping (or body contouring) but rarely shifts much weight. There are a few weeks after the procedure where exercise is difficult. By the time that you restart a serious exercise regime, the weight loss from the procedure may be quite minimal.

Mothers looking to regain their pre-pregnancy shape need to wait at least 12 months after their last birth, and should consider waiting until 12 months after the finish breast feeding. Medicare (and therefore your private health fund) will not provide any financial support if your procedure is performed prior to your last child's first birthday. Yes, they really do check!!

Your consultation

You should expect to spend about an hour with Dr Gavin Sandercoe. During this time he will take a thorough history and examination. Measurements and digital photographs are taken to assist with planning and explaining any limitations. You should expect to discuss the three critical components of abdominal wall shape (muscle tone, fat disposition, skin excess) and how the procedure will be tailored to your body shape.

Dr Gavin Sandercoe will discuss what you wish to achieve from your procedure and the risks involved. Clinical photographs of other patients are used to help discuss your expectations. You are provided with a take home information package to review before your second consultation.

When to re-start activities

- Most patients spend 3-4 days in hospital after their procedure, and take about 2 weeks off from work.
- At about 4 weeks, light exercise is safe. Most patients can continue to lose weight from now with an exercise plan that revolves around walking or an exercise bike.
- It takes the tissues around 6-8 weeks to fully heal, and at this time it is safe to begin heavy work and aerobic activities such as running. Performing core exercises (such as sit ups) may take a full 8 weeks prior to being able to be performed without discomfort.
- If you are unsure or sore, back off for a week before trying again.

Abdominoplasty risks

All procedures carry some risk. Having your procedure done in an accredited hospital minimises your risk during a procedure. Generally speaking, patients undergoing elective surgery have very minimal risk, but it is a doctor's duty to inform patients of all their material risks. Our consent package details these risks and Dr Sandercoe will discuss these with you during your consultation.

Will my private health insurance cover some costs?

In certain circumstances, as specified by Medicare, some of your procedure may be covered by your private health insurance.

Questions?

We wish to keep our patients as informed as possible. The best way of making sure that all your questions get answered is to have a pad with you and jot down your questions & bring them to your consultations. We encourage you to also bring your partner or friend with you. Please keep us aware of your problems and any suggestions to improve our patient care.

A more in depth discussion of abdominoplasty can be found at www.drgavinsandercoe.com.au.