

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO A **TUMMY TUCK**

(Abdominoplasty)




**DR. BRYAN
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Refining Natural Beauty

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Are you self-conscious because of a little extra weight around your middle? Do you want to recover that slim, toned figure you once had?

Being concerned or self-conscious about attributes of your physical appearance is completely normal. But why leave it at that? Why be one of the hundreds of thousands each year that choose to continue living with low self-esteem and self-conscious thoughts?

Advancements in medicine and medical technology have provided access to treatment options to address these types of issues, providing that self-confidence we need to allow our inner beauty to shine through. Cosmetic surgery is a safe, affordable, and effective way to enhance aspects of your body that detract from your self-image and self-confidence.

By choosing a highly trained, board certified plastic surgeon like Dr. Bryan McIntosh, you can be assured that you've made the right decision to have a tummy tuck procedure, and achieve a renewed self-confidence because of your attractive new figure.

Preparing for Plastic Surgery

Plastic surgery spans a wide range of procedures, including: breast augmentation (augmentation mammoplasty), tummy tuck (abdominoplasty), dermabrasion, reconstructive procedures, and many more. According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, of the 1.7 million cosmetic surgical procedures performed in 2016, the top 6 were:

1. Breast Augmentation (290,467 procedures—up 4% from 2015)
2. Liposuction (235,237 procedures—up 6% from 2015)
3. Nose Reshaping (223,018 procedures—up 2% from 2015)
4. Eyelid Surgery (209,020 procedures—up 2% from 2015)
5. Facelift (131,106 procedures—up 4% from 2015)
6. Tummy Tuck (127,633 procedures—no change from 2015)

CHOOSE THE RIGHT SURGEON

We believe that choosing the right surgeon is one of the most important factors in your decision to have a tummy tuck surgery. Because it is legal for any licensed physician to offer cosmetic services, a doctor calling themselves a “Cosmetic Surgeon” could be an ENT (Ear, Nose, and Throat) Surgeon, a Dermatologist, a General Surgeon, an Ophthalmologist, a General Practitioner, or an actual Plastic Surgeon. However, in order for a physician to be a “Plastic Surgeon”, they must complete an approved Residency training program specifically in Plastic Surgery. And only a highly-trained and very experienced Plastic Surgeon can become Board Certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery.

Of course, you should choose a surgeon that is highly-qualified, experienced, talented, and certified in plastic surgery by the American Board of Plastic Surgery. But you should also choose a surgeon who is patient, understanding, able to communicate well, and someone with whom you connect. You need to feel comfortable asking your surgeon a lot of questions, so you can assess whether or not they will be a good fit for you and your needs.

Questions You Should Definitely Ask:

- ✓ Are they a highly-trained plastic surgeon, or merely a “cosmetic surgeon”—a doctor from another field of medicine offering cosmetic procedures? What kind of training have they received? What schools did they attend and graduate from? And what post medical school residencies and fellowships did they complete? (They should have completed a residency or fellowship specifically in Plastic Surgery. You don’t want someone whose only training was a brief, several week course in cosmetic procedures.)
- ✓ Does your surgeon have enough of the right kind of experience performing the type of surgery you desire? How many of these procedures have they performed? (It’s best if your surgeon has performed a lot of these types of procedures over the course of several years.)
- ✓ Are they Board Certified? (It’s best to find a Plastic Surgeon that has been certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery, as Dr. McIntosh has been.)

UNDERSTAND THE RISKS

Is your plastic surgeon suggesting that your procedure will be risk-free? This should be viewed as a huge red flag, because real professionals know that there is never a risk-free surgical procedure. Every surgery presents some level of risk to the patient, so it’s important to know exactly what these are for you.

During your consultation with Dr. McIntosh, he will be open and honest about the possible risks of a tummy tuck, or any other procedure that may be discussed. In order to fully assess whether a procedure would be a good fit for you, it is vitally important that you fully disclose all of your current health conditions, whether or not you think they are important or would be relevant. Chronic headaches, STD’s, heart disease, or even something as small as a residual chest cold could make the difference between safely performing a procedure next week, having to wait, or not being a candidate at all.

Health conditions, medications, herbal medicines, and even herbal supplements can all affect you while under anesthesia, during surgery, or during your recovery. Full disclosure will allow Dr. McIntosh to minimize the risks associated with a tummy tuck, and keep you safe and healthy while helping you achieve your goals.

VERIFY YOUR INSURANCE COVERAGE

Generally, cosmetic procedures such as a tummy tuck are not typically covered by insurance. So it is very likely that the surgery will not be covered by your insurance company. This means that you should plan to pay for the entirety of the procedure out of your own pocket, or through special financing.

While there are certain procedures that may be covered by insurance, this typically only applies if they are deemed medically necessary by your insurance provider. Examples of this might include an eyelid lift (blepharoplasty) to improve impaired vision, or a nose job (rhinoplasty) to repair a deviated septum. It is rare that a tummy tuck would be considered medically necessary by an insurance company.

If you feel that your cosmetic surgery may be able to qualify for insurance coverage, call your individual insurance carrier to discuss the possibility of filing a claim or obtaining prior approval. We'd be happy to write a letter to your insurance company to assist you in obtaining pre-authorization for a procedure as well.

UNDERSTAND YOUR PROCEDURE

It is important that you have a clear understanding of all that your desired surgical procedure entails. A thorough knowledge of the procedure itself, how to prepare, what to expect during recovery, and a realistic expectation of the results and what to expect in the years to come is the best way to ensure your overall satisfaction.

Tell your surgeon what your goals are, and how you think the specific surgery you're requesting will fulfill them. While many things can be modified and improved by plastic surgery, there may be some limitations to what can actually be achieved. You should not go into any surgery with unrealistic expectations of the outcome. Having an open and honest discussion with your plastic surgeon about this will ensure that you are not disappointed with the results of your procedure, but instead are thrilled and inspired!

KNOW THE COSTS

The cost of plastic surgery varies greatly. Not including anesthesia, elective cosmetic procedures can range in cost anywhere from \$500 to \$10,000 or more. These costs will vary according to the type of surgery being performed, what type of sedation or anesthesia is needed, and whether or not an overnight stay is required.

Because plastic surgeons understand that the costs of surgery can be high, and that some patients may not be able to afford to pay the full amount that's required at the time of surgery, most offices, ours included, have partnered with lenders who

specialize in providing healthcare financing options that accept payment plans. We don't want financial burden to hinder you from achieving the look that you've been longing for and dreaming about for years.

HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Of course, making the choice to have plastic surgery should not be one that is entered into lightly or too quickly. The decision to have your body and physical appearance permanently altered through surgery is a serious one, and you should have realistic expectations of what cosmetic surgical procedures are able to achieve for you in helping you attain your desired appearance.

Becoming educated about the procedures that you desire, and having honest and open conversations with a trusted plastic surgeon will help move you closer to achieving your individual goals.

Understanding the Tummy Tuck Procedure

Since 2000, the tummy tuck procedure has increased in popularity by 87%. As awareness increases about the availability and safety of tummy tuck procedures, more men and women are considering this option. And with the increase of TV shows documenting the tremendous amount of weight loss achieved by obese individuals, the other half of their life altering journey is dealing with the side effects of massive weight loss—excessive amounts of loose skin and tissue—where a tummy tuck can often be part of the solution.

A tummy tuck (or abdominoplasty) is a procedure that removes the excess skin and fat from the abdomen usually following pregnancy or excessive weight loss. And in most cases, a tummy tuck procedure restores weakened or separated muscles creating an abdominal profile that is smoother and firmer. This type of procedure is used when dieting methods and exercise are not affecting the excess tissue on the abdomen.

The tummy tuck procedure may also be combined with liposuction (also called body sculpting) to help remove excess fat from the hips, buttocks, and other areas of the body so that the end result is a natural-looking, slim figure.

The procedure is also frequently combined with breast augmentation. In these situations, the combined surgery may be called a 'Mommy Makeover', because of the many mothers experiencing sagging or deflated breast tissue along with residual fat and excess skin on their tummies following multiple pregnancies.

What a tummy tuck procedure can't do:

- ❌ A tummy tuck is not a substitute for weight loss or an appropriate exercise program. Although the results of a tummy tuck are technically permanent, the positive outcome can be greatly diminished by significant fluctuations in your weight. For this reason, individuals who are planning substantial weight loss or women who may be considering future pregnancies would be advised to postpone having a tummy tuck surgery.
- ❌ A tummy tuck cannot correct stretch marks, although these may be removed or somewhat improved if they are located on the areas of excess skin that will be excised during the tummy tuck procedure.

WHO IS A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR A TUMMY TUCK?

In general, you may be a good tummy tuck candidate if:

- ✓ You are physically healthy, and at a stable weight.
- ✓ You have realistic expectations about what can be achieved.
- ✓ You are a non-smoker.
- ✓ You are bothered by the appearance of your abdomen.

The tummy tuck surgery is not the correct option for those individuals that are still significantly overweight. Instead, these men and women should focus on losing additional weight so that they can be prepared for their tummy tuck surgery. Additionally, those who struggle with weight gain must realize that the tummy tuck surgery will be affected by future weight gain. It is not a means of preventing weight gain or achieving weight loss.

Women that are hoping to have additional children in the future will not be a good candidate for the tummy tuck. Pregnancy can cause the sutured muscles to separate. Also, the tummy tuck procedure should not be performed until quite some time after childbirth. Mothers will continue to lose baby-weight and naturally have their muscles and skin retract for a number of months following delivery. It is normal for this to take some time.

Preparation for a Tummy Tuck

The first thing you need to do is find an excellent plastic surgeon who is trustworthy, board certified, experienced in tummy tuck procedures, and someone with whom you feel comfortable. During your personalized consultation, it is important that you ask questions and understand the answers that you are given. Having a candid discussion with your plastic surgeon about your personal goals and desires for your appearance following the procedure will help to ensure that you are pleased with the results.

PREPARING YOUR BODY

Before undergoing a tummy tuck procedure, you should:

- ✓ Have a thorough knowledge of the procedure, including the length of recovery and possible complications.
- ✓ Quit smoking at least four weeks before your scheduled surgery. If you require nicotine patches or other assistance to help you stop smoking, inform your plastic surgeon. It is important that smoking is stopped completely, as the use of tobacco makes complications more likely, and it also tends to slow the healing process.
- ✓ Eat well. Do not participate in any major dieting or fasting before the surgery. Instead, regularly eat well-balanced and healthy meals. Fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains will help your body on the road to recovery.
- ✓ Tell your surgeon about any prescription medications, herbal medicines, or herbal supplements that you are taking. Your surgeon may instruct you to stop taking one or more of these of these medications for a span of time prior to and following your surgery.
- ✓ Have any blood tests done that your plastic surgeon recommends.
- ✗ Do not take Aspirin, Ibuprofen, or similar drugs for at least 10 days prior to your surgery.
- ✗ You should not eat or drink anything during the 8 hours before surgery.
- ✗ Do not consume alcohol for at least 48 hours prior to surgery.

PREPARING YOUR HOME

You'll also need to devote some time to preparing your home for your return after surgery. Following an invasive procedure like a tummy tuck, you'll need to ensure that

you have everything prepared beforehand. You'll also want to communicate to all the family members that you'll be in a delicate state and will need to take it easy for several days, at least, after returning home. If you have pets that require a lot of attention, you may want to board them for the first week following the procedure.

Before your procedure, you'll want to get a few things ready:

- ✓ Ice packs.
- ✓ Loose and comfortable clothing that may be put on and taken off easily—comfortable button up shirts are a good choice.
- ✓ Petroleum jelly.
- ✓ Hand-held shower head.
- ✓ Bathroom chair.
- ✓ Pain medications recommended by your plastic surgeon.
- ✓ Books/reading material to entertain you as you rest and recuperate.
- ✓ A comfortable place where you will be able to rest without disturbance from other family members or pets.
- ✓ You'll need a friend or family member to drive you home after your tummy tuck and stay with you overnight for at least the first night.

ON THE DAY OF YOUR PROCEDURE

On the day of your tummy tuck surgery, plan to arrive at the office about 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment time. This will allow you to complete any paperwork that has yet to be finished. And any additional questions that you have regarding the procedure may be asked at this time as well.

When you go in for your surgery, keep these things in mind:

- ✓ Wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothing.
- ✗ Do not wear contact lenses.
- ✗ Do not wear jewelry.
- ✗ Do not wear makeup.
- ✗ Do not wear nail polish.

After you have been prepped for surgery, you will be given anesthesia to put you to sleep for the duration of the procedure so that you do not experience any pain or discomfort. During the procedure your surgeon will make an incision across your navel. He will cut loose the skin from the muscles and abdominal tissue, and proceed to cut away all the excess skin and fat, suturing muscles and tissues until the abdomen is smooth and flat.

A normal tummy tuck takes between two to five hours. Mini-tummy tucks (removal of fat deposits below the navel only) may take less time. Abdominoplasties that include liposuction (body sculpting) to remove additional fat in the surrounding areas will take an additional amount of time.

As you awaken from the surgery, you will be monitored for several hours following. In some instances, you will need to stay in the hospital overnight. Discuss these expectations with your surgeon before the surgery so that you may plan accordingly, but keep in mind that if there are complications or concerns that arise during or after the procedure is completed, you may need to stay longer than originally anticipated.

Pain is usually controlled with over-the-counter pain relievers, unless your surgeon prescribes a stronger medication. Generally, the pain is moderate and well controlled with aspirin.

DURING YOUR RECOVERY

There will be stitches and bandaging that you will need to take care of when you get home. Your surgeon will provide you with specific instructions on how to care for the bandages in the days following the surgery, and it is important that you follow them closely in order to prevent infection or excessive bleeding. You will be given a firm elastic band to place round the area to assist the healing process.

You will also receive guidelines regarding the proper ways to sit and lie down without experiencing increased pain or discomfort. It will be preferable that you do not go up and down stairs for several days following the surgery. Showers should be taken sitting down on a bathroom chair, and you should carefully avoid wetting the bandages.

It is normal to experience swelling and bruising following surgery. Residual exhaustion, numbness of the area surrounding the incision, and pain are also to be expected. Soreness will usually continue for up to two months, and there may be tenderness for some time.

You will be advised to strictly limit your physical activity for 6 weeks following the tummy tuck procedure. Because of this, it may be necessary that you take up to one month off from work after the surgery to ensure a full recovery. Heavy objects should not be lifted for at least two weeks.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

As with any surgery, there is the possibility of complications. Though these are rare, some complications that may occur are:

- Infection.
- Bleeding beneath the skin flap.
- Development of blood clots.

If any abnormal bleeding or drainage occurs, you should call your plastic surgeon immediately. Those who have other health conditions, such as poor circulation, diabetes, autoimmune diseases, heart, liver, or lung diseases are more likely to experience complications than average, healthy individuals.

Scarring is a normal part of surgery. If you experience insufficient healing, however, this can result in more significant scarring. Those who experience more extensive scarring may require a second surgery.

ENJOYING YOUR NEW BODY

Tummy tucks are one of the most popular forms of plastic surgery for good reason. Almost invariably, clients are overjoyed with their new look. Kate Gosselin, TV personality, said, "It'll be the best decision you've ever made!"

This opinion is widely shared by other men and women that have had the procedure. While there will be scars following a tummy tuck, these can be mitigated by the use of creams designed to help scars heal. They will eventually fade over time.

Continuing a healthy lifestyle is recommended after having a tummy tuck. Exercise (once fully recovered) and healthy eating are vital in maintaining healthy, wrinkle-free skin and body weight.

Personalized Consultation

Welcome to the new and improved version of you! Dr. McIntosh specializes in performing tummy tuck surgeries as well as many other procedures to help patients look and feel their best. He loves to help patients uncover new beauty and gain self-confidence. Our patients are consistently pleased with their results.

We would love to connect with you during one of our consultations to hear your concerns, and learn how you would like to rejuvenate your appearance. Our goal is to help eliminate any feelings of self-consciousness you may have about your physical appearance so you can be confident in your beautiful new body.

Contact us to schedule a personalized consultation for a Tummy Tuck:

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