

Information leaflet for people who are considering undergoing abdominoplasty (a tummy tuck).

Bey By Bergman Clinics – April 2022

In this leaflet, you will read information about abdominoplasty (a tummy tuck): why and when to undergo the procedure, the consultation, the preparation, the procedure, the period after the procedure, the result, and lastly, the complications and risks that may arise. Your personal situation and options for treatment can only be discussed during a personal conversation. This leaflet serves as preparation and/or addition to your conversation with the plastic surgeon.

Why and when

Weight loss, pregnancies, ageing and surgeries can cause severe drooping or stretching of the abdominal wall. The skin and the underlying fatty tissue hang around the belly like a coat that is far too big. All this excess skin can get in the way, the skin becomes irritated near the skin folds and clothing does not fit properly (anymore). All this can also cause a person to feel dissatisfied or even very unhappy about the external appearance of the abdomen, which no longer matches the rest of the body. If you are experiencing any of the problems listed above and if they bother you, you may have good reason to consider surgery. Abdominoplasty (a tummy tuck) may be a good option for you.

Abdominoplasty is often combined with the removal of subcutaneous fat along the sides of the body, or with the removal of skin and fatty tissue from the sides and back of the body. You will find more information about this in the leaflet on Liposuction.

Abdominoplasty is not a type of surgery that will make you thinner. The aim of the surgery is to remove excess skin and subcutaneous tissue. You will not be treated if you are severely overweight. In that case, you will need to lose weight first, which will improve the result of the surgery and reduce the risks.

Consultation

During a non-binding consultation with the plastic surgeon, you will have the opportunity to discuss your wishes and complaints. He/she will examine your abdomen and discuss with you whether abdominoplasty will sufficiently resolve your problem. Next, your questions will be answered and you will receive the most detailed possible information about the preparation, the procedure, the follow-up care, the expected result and the possible complications. After all, you may be disappointed with the result if you go into the procedure with the wrong idea. If the plastic surgeon is not convinced that your problem can be adequately resolved with abdominoplasty, he/she will discuss this with you, as well. If possible, the surgeon will propose a different solution, such as liposuction or reverse abdominoplasty. If you wish, you can be referred to a colleague for a second opinion.

Cosmetic surgery is not covered by health insurance. Reimbursement of medically necessary surgery depends on the criteria set by the healthcare insurance company for this procedure. You can consult your healthcare insurance company and/or policy terms and conditions to check these criteria. The specialist cannot deviate from these criteria. The current rules for reimbursement may change in the future.

Your own responsibilities prior to your surgery:

You should observe a number of preparations in the period prior to your surgery, such as:

- **Stopping blood thinners (anticoagulants):**

You may need to stop taking your blood-thinning medication prior to the surgery. The plastic surgeon will inform you about this. In addition, you attended a pre-operative screening with the anaesthesiology assistant several weeks prior to your surgery, in which your health and the medication policy were discussed. This included a discussion of which blood-thinning medication you need to stop using (temporarily). If your prescribing physician does not approve the temporary discontinuation of blood-thinning medication, then the scheduled surgery cannot take place at Bey by Bergman Clinics.

- **Submit your general medication overview (GMO):**

If you are using medication, this overview can be obtained from your pharmacy. You can also give us permission to share your medication details via the National Exchange Point.

- **Submit the signed Informed Consent Form:**

You will receive this form once your surgery has been scheduled.

- Pay the invoice according to the terms of payment*.

ALCOHOL POLICY:

- No alcohol for 48 hours before surgery and 2 weeks after surgery.

SMOKING POLICY:

- Smoking has a negative effect on wound healing.
- No smoking for 4 weeks before surgery and 4 weeks after surgery.

NAIL VARNISH POLICY:

- There is no need to remove nail varnish, gel nails or acrylic nails prior to the surgery.

DRUGS POLICY:

- Use of drugs like XTC, methamphetamine, heroin or cocaine must be stopped at least 1 week before surgery. This can otherwise cause severe heart rhythm disorders during the operation or reduce the effect of anaesthetics.
- This does not apply to prescription amphetamine use for AD(H)D.
- The same rules as for smoking apply to cannabis.

FASTING POLICY:

Please refer to the anaesthesiology leaflet for the fasting policy.

Good idea to purchase before the surgery:

- Paracetamol 500 mg, 2 tablets 4x daily
- Naproxen (Aleve) 250 mg 2x daily, if necessary (reduce this pain medication before paracetamol)
- Pantoprazole (gastric protector) 20 mg 1x daily (with use of Naproxen)
- Cotton sanitary pads
- Non-sterile gauze

The surgery

- The plastic surgeon will mark the skin incisions on the area of skin that needs to be removed just before surgery.
- You will then be placed under general anaesthesia and the surgical field will be disinfected and covered with sterile drapes.
- Next, the horizontal incision will be made according to the markings below the bikini line. From there, the skin and subcutaneous fatty tissue will be loosened right up to the ribs and the breastbone. The belly button will

remain attached to the underlying muscle layer. The skin is pulled taut and the excess skin and subcutaneous fatty tissue are removed.

- If the abdominal muscles have stretched, these will also be shortened. A hole is pierced in the abdominal skin to allow the bellybutton out. The bellybutton is then sutured into position.
- The scar will run along the lower abdomen, from the outside of one hip to the outside of the other hip. The scar usually falls below the bikini line. The fact that the bellybutton is sutured into a new position usually also results in a scar around the bellybutton.
- Finally, the wound is closed in layers.

Two or three tubes (drains) will be left in the wound during the surgery, with vacuum bottles to suction off any excess blood or wound exudate.

If you are allowed home, somebody must accompany you home. You may not drive a vehicle yourself. We also recommend that you do not spend the first 24 hours alone at home.

After the procedure

You will experience some pain after any procedure. This is normal. You can take the prescribed pain medication for this pain. Due to high tension in the tissue, the wound can open spontaneously in some places about one or two weeks after the surgery. There is no need to worry about this. You should rinse the wound with the shower head every day and then dress it with a sanitary pad. The sanitary pad ensures that the wound is not pulled open again every time the dressing is removed. The open wounds will heal spontaneously over the course of four to eight weeks. Please contact the number +31 (0)88 9000535 if you have any questions about this.

Recovery period

Starting from the day after the surgery, you may:

- Sleep on your side with knees bent during the 1st week. You may also sleep on your back, but with a pillow under your knees
- Shower on a daily basis at home, rinsing the bellybutton thoroughly to clean
- Use sanitary pads or non-sterile gauze for any oozing of the wound at home.
- Mobilise according to the pain, listen to your body. Regular short walks are recommended during the first weeks
- If the muscles have been shortened, you should not walk completely upright during the first week.
- Increase your activities further each day
- You can start driving and cycling 2 weeks after surgery (this depends on your healthcare insurance company)
- Sauna, bath, swimming pool and exercise after 6 weeks.

You will be fitted with an elasticated belt around the abdomen after the surgery.

You should wear these:

- Day and night during the first 2 weeks
- During the day in weeks 3 and 4
- If necessary in weeks 5 and 6

Exceptions: If the muscles have been shortened, then wear the elasticated belt day & night for 4 weeks and during the day in weeks 5 and 6.

You will need to use SPF 30 sun cream to protect the scars against the sun during the first year. Ask your specialist about any restrictions in your travel plans after your procedure.

You will visit the nurses and the specialist for check-ups after the surgery. We want to remind you that it is important for you to attend these follow-up appointments. This allows the nurse and the medical specialist to monitor the progress of your recovery. They can also offer advice if you have any questions regarding the information provided above.

The result

Abdominoplasty is major surgery, but it is a safe and reliable procedure, which will rid you of the excess overhanging abdominal tissue (fat apron). The surgery often does not change the shape of the abdomen. If you had a very rounded belly due to a large abdominal volume – for example due to fat accumulation in the abdomen – then this shape will not change. The plastic surgeon can determine the final result of the abdominoplasty after approximately three to twelve months. The scars of an abdominoplasty run around the bellybutton and across the lower abdomen.

The scars often fall below the underwear or bikini line. Abdominoplasty often also results in lifting and reduction of the pubic mound. A small ridge may still be visible around the scar on the lower abdomen. This is due to the fact that the abdominal wall above the scar often has a little more subcutaneous fat than the pubic area below the scar. If you wish, this can probably be corrected with liposuction at a later stage.

Most people are satisfied with the result of the abdominoplasty. Unfortunately, the result is not always permanent. In some cases the result will deteriorate over time, for example due to changes in weight or the fact that the skin and tissues of your abdominal gradually become stretched again. If this happens, you can consider repeating this procedure. Perhaps you are not satisfied with the result, for example because you had different expectations. Please be sure to mention this.

Complications and risks

The plastic surgeon always invests a great deal of time, care and personal attention in your treatment. However, complications do unfortunately occur: no procedure is entirely free of the risk of complications. The normal risks of surgery – such as thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, post-op bleeding and wound infection – also apply to this surgery. Specific complications can also occur:

- The most common complication after abdominoplasty is a post-op bleed (a chance of 1% to 2%). This will result in extra swelling and pain. A post-op bleed usually occurs within the first hours after the surgery. If a post-op bleed occurs, then you will require further surgery to remove the excess blood and to stop the bleeding.
- The wound can become infected. This does not happen often. If this does happen, it usually only occurs one or two weeks after the surgery. You can start to feel ill and the wound can open up, causing it to ooze pus and old blood. You must contact the clinic if you start to feel ill, if the wound becomes red and/or if you develop a fever.
- There is a small risk of death (necrosis) of the wound edges along the scars and around the bellybutton. Wound exudate can also leak from the wound due to necrosis of the subcutaneous fatty tissue. Often the plastic surgeon will wait until the necrotic tissue has dried and fallen off, but sometimes it needs to be removed surgically. The wound is often left open and needs to be rinsed twice a day until the wound has healed spontaneously.
- Following the removal of excess skin and fat, there is a risk that the bellybutton will no longer sit exactly in the centre. Sometimes the pubic hair is pulled up too high. It is often not possible to correct this. You can lower your pubic hairline by means of a hair removal method.
- The scar running across the lower abdomen may not be completely straight. The reason for this is that your abdominal wall was not entirely symmetrical before the surgery either.
- The skin in the area below the bellybutton and along the scar often has reduced sensation or no sensation at all. This generally does not cause problems. The sensation often recovers partially over the course of the years.
- Some excess skin may remain on the hips following abdominoplasty. This usually fades over time. Sometimes a further procedure is required to correct this. This can usually be performed under local anaesthesia.

Always contact us after surgery in the following cases:

- Significantly increased swelling of the wound or the surgical area
- Pain, if the pain medication does not help or the pain even increases
- Redness and swelling of the wound
- Feeling ill and/or a fever, above 38°C (measured via the anus)
- Persistent nausea
- Acute tightness across the chest
- Acute pain in the leg, possibly with swelling
- Being unable to urinate, whilst drinking normal quantities
- Concerns or doubts

We can be contacted for emergencies 24 hours per day, via +31 (0)88 9000 567.

For non-urgent matters, please call +31 (0)88 9000 535 during office hours.

More information

If you have any further questions after reading this leaflet, you can ask your plastic surgeon to answer these questions at any time. You can schedule an appointment for a consultation. You can contact the clinic on telephone number +31 (0)88 9000 535 about this.

Complaints and privacy regulations

Bey by Bergman Clinics has complaints and privacy regulations in place. A copy of these regulations can be obtained from our locations and on our website www.beyclinics.nl.

Cooling-off period

Bey by Bergman Clinics acts according to the guidelines of the NVPC and thus implements a 'cooling-off' period. This is the time between the first consultation in which the treatment is proposed and the decision to continue with the treatment. We implement a cooling-off period of one week for a cosmetic surgical procedure.

Terms and conditions of payment*

The first instalment of 25% of the treatment costs must be paid within 5 days after receipt of the invoice. The remainder of the treatment costs should be received by us no later than 4 weeks prior to the surgery date. Cash payments are only possible following agreement with your consultant.

If your surgery has been approved by your healthcare insurance company, then you are responsible for reading the terms and conditions of your insurance policy to check that they will reimburse 100% of the costs of your surgery.

Cancellation policy

You must cancel your surgery in writing. Cancellation within 3 weeks prior to your surgery will result in costs already incurred to the sum of 25% of the costs of surgery being billed to you. Cancellation within 48 hours prior to the agreed date of surgery is only permitted in the case of absolute and demonstrable force majeure. In all other cases of non-insured care, you will be billed for 100% of the agreed treatment costs. In the case of a treatment that is reimbursed by your healthcare insurance company, your treatment cannot be rescheduled at Bey by Bergman Clinics. The aforementioned cancellation policy also applies if the surgery cannot be performed due to failure on your part to fulfil your responsibilities as listed in this leaflet.

Finally

This leaflet serves as preparation and as a supplement to the conversation with the plastic surgeon and as a 'reference' for after the surgery. However, such a description can never apply completely to each individual situation. Plastic and aesthetic surgery is not an exact science; this written information should in no way be construed as a guarantee for the course of events and result of your procedure.