

# Pre & Aftercare Information

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## Tummy Tuck



This information has been provided to enhance your journey through your treatment pathway. We recommend that read this advice and if you are unsure about anything then please do not hesitate to contact us.

General enquiries: 01892 257357 (Mon - Fri, 9am - 5pm).  
For out of hours emergencies and at weekends, please call 07753 211771.



## Procedure Information

### Preparation before surgery:

- Smoking (cigarettes or e-cigarette with nicotine) - you should avoid or significantly reduce the amount you smoke. Nicotine causes the blood vessels to close up and this effect lasts for 45 - 60 minutes following inhalation. It is one of the most important requirements to lower the risk of postoperative infection and other healing complications. Ideally we would suggest to avoid smoking for a minimum of one month before and after surgery.
- Please arrange transport home with a family member or friend. They can drop you to the hospital and see you after your surgery.
- Flying before and after surgery: Short haul (less than 3 hours - you must not fly for 7 days before your procedure and 7 days after your procedure) Long haul (more than 3 hours - you must not fly for 14 days before your procedure and 14 days after your procedure).
- Do NOT take Arnica or herbal tablets 10 days before and 3 days after your surgery. This will significantly reduce your risk of bruising. If you are on blood thinning medication, notify us immediately.
- We will provide you with two surgical garments, the first will be fitted after surgery, with the second provided at your one week follow-up appointment with the nurse once the initial swelling has settled. If you wish to purchase additional garments, please speak with your patient coordinator.
- Please ensure you have taken enough time off work. You can return to office type work after 14 days, any manual work 21 days or longer (surgeon will advise).
- You will have limited mobility for the first week, ensure childcare is arranged or you have someone to help you.
- Your patient coordinator will arrange a pre assessment appointment before your surgery. We will notify you of the date by email or phone.
- You will have 1 overnight stay with us, we provide a toiletry bag with all essentials such as shower gel, shampoo and conditioner as well as a toothbrush with toothpaste and a spa gown. Do pack slippers and a comfortable set of clothes for discharge. Feel free to bring along an entertainment device and/or phone (and their chargers). If you take medication regularly, bring this with you.
- We ask all patients to remove false eyelashes and nail treatments including varnish before attending for surgery, as well as fake tan and all jewellery.
- Admission times are allocated the week before surgery, and confirmed by phone the day before.

## Procedure Information

The day of surgery:

If you are scheduled for general anaesthetic, please observe the following:

- Do not eat anything up to 6 hours before your surgery. This includes boiled sweets and chewing gum.
- Do not drink anything but water up to 4 hours before your surgery. Please stop drinking altogether up to 2 hours before your surgery.

## Procedure Information

### Aftercare in the following days after surgery

We will call you a few days after your surgery to see how you are feeling and to also make follow up appointments. This will consist of:

- Approx 1 week follow up with our nurse and wound care specialist.
- Approx 6 week follow up in clinic or by phone if you live at a considerable distance.
- Approx 6 month follow up either in clinic or by phone.

If you have any concerns, our door is always open and additional follow up appointments can be scheduled by contacting your patient coordinator or Bella Vou directly.

- You can shower the day after surgery and daily thereafter, using your usual products, keeping the micropore tape on the incision site. Once finished, gently dab the tape dry with your towel. The tape must be changed weekly as advised and worn for a total period of 3 months. We will provide a supply of tape in your aftercare bag.
- Please wear your compression garment for a minimum of six weeks after surgery (remove it prior to showering and if the garment needs washing)
- Discomfort, swelling and numbness is expected.
- In the first few days and week, you will be tired, swollen and tender, and generally less mobile, this is quite normal. Although it is important to rest, don't forget to keep a good level of mobility, to avoid deep vein thrombosis. Moving your ankles up and down as you would on a longhaul flight while resting in bed, is a good way of doing so.
- After surgery you need to sleep elevated and on your back for 14 days,. You DO NOT need to sleep upright - 1 - 2 pillows to aid drainage of the swelling, with a pillow under your knees to avoid tension on the abdomen/tummy.
- Initial fluid leakage and bloody staining is common during the first few days.
- Take pain medication as needed and instructed, if you experience constipation, we advise taking prune juice and staying well hydrated, as well as enjoying a healthy diet.

## Procedure Information

### Aftercare in the following days after surgery

- You will have limited mobility in the first week. For the first 2 days try and keep arm movement to minimum. Your arms should not be used to support your body or lift anything heavy.
- You will be provided with compression stockings which must be worn night and day for the first 2 weeks, unless showering. If you are more mobile after the second week, you may remove the stocking during the day, only wearing them at night, but do remember to move your feet up and down at regular intervals during the day, as you would on a long haul flight. (unless the surgery was performed under a local anaesthetic).
- When you return for your 1 week follow up the nurse and manual lymphatic massage with our specialist, they will advise you how to massage your tummy in the coming weeks. It's important you massage the area to help soften, reduce swelling and make the recovery process easier for you.
- If you need to cough or sneeze during the first few days, hug a cushion or pillow over your tummy while you do, it will make it more comfortable.

## Procedure Information

### Aftercare in the following weeks

- Most of the swelling and bruising should have diminished within 4-6 weeks after surgery and you will not require as many painkillers, compared to the first week following surgery however, the swelling will only settle entirely after 6 months.
- If you feel comfortable to drive, you can after the second week as long as you are able to perform an emergency stop successfully. Avoid driving if you are taking a lot of painkillers as this can make you drowsy. The seatbelt will be sitting over your scar, so be advised that for long journeys this might be uncomfortable.
- You must avoid any long distance travel or long haul flights for at least 6 weeks following surgery to this area and if you have had a general anaesthetic, if you do travel soon after this time, please wear the anti-thrombotic worn during your initial recovery..
- After 6 weeks of surgery your tummy should start to feel softer and more natural. The scars should have started to fade. Please remember healing is a gradual process and your scars may remain slightly pink for up to 6-12 months.
- You may experience itchiness and/or pins and needles in the months following surgery as the nerves in the area begin to reestablish sensation, this is normal and will settle in time.



## Procedure Information

### Photographic examples



Before surgery



3 months after surgery

## Procedure Information

### Frequently Asked Questions

When can I start exercising?

You can start low impact exercise 6 weeks after surgery, such as: walking or gentle bike rides. Please avoid running, pectoral exercises, abdominal crunches and weight lifting for about 2 - 3 months after surgery.

When can I start sleeping on my front?

This will differ from patient to patient, therefore see which position you find most comfortable. After 4 weeks you can sleep on your front.

When can I start driving?

We recommend after about 1 week minimum. You need to be able to perform an emergency stop safely before you resume driving. Remember the seatbelt will rest across your scar as well and this might be uncomfortable in the first week or two.

When can I resume manual work or heavy lifting (housework, gardening, picking up children etc)?

You can resume heavy lifting after 6 weeks. Please listen to your body however if you need more time, allow for this as patients heal at different rates.

When can I go swimming or have a bath?

Avoid bathing for at least 2 weeks or until all the scabs have fallen away from the incision site leaving fresh new tissue, if any scabs remain, refrain from bathing. Once you are able to return to exercise and the wound is completely healed, you may resume swimming.

When can I fly?

You can fly 6 weeks after surgery. Ensure movement of the legs and feet after every few hours. It would be advisable to wear flight stockings/ VTE stockings for your journey to help prevent any clots forming in the calves.

When can I go into the sun?

We recommend protecting the incision from sunlight for a year after surgery, using an SPF 50+. In the first 6 - 9 months following the surgery, the scars are immature. Even with a light top on, if the sun UV rays hits the scars they will go red. This will be the case until the scar matures, fades and becomes paler which usually occurs by 9 months. After this time the scarred area will behave like your normal skin. Therefore prior to this time we advise high protection creams to prevent burning of the area.

I still feel the abdomen is swollen and it has been 6 weeks. Is this normal?

Yes it is normal. The swelling and overall effect from the surgery will not be apparent for at least 3 - 6 months from the time of surgery. It is quite normal to still be quite stiff and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions, queries.

How long will it take for my scar to fade?

It can take approximately 12-18 months before the scar fades. It will gradually become less red month by month. It is important to continue massaging the area as advised.

## Some Final Bits...

What should I do if I have questions or concerns about my procedure post operative?

Should you have any concerns during the first days or weeks of your recovery, such as whether everything is settling properly, if you suspect an infection or your wound has opened up a little; please be assured that we are always on hand to support you, so please contact us directly. During clinic opening hours, please call the clinic on 01892 257 357. For out of hour emergencies, please call 07753 211 771. While it's tempting to look for health advice online to find an answer to a question or concern, your procedure, your surgeon and your body are completely unique so please speak to your patient coordinator who will arrange for a clinician to set your mind at ease. Typically there is nothing to worry about in most instances, our team of specialists nurses and surgeons are always on hand to assist and assure you.

## Revision Policy

### General Revisions

While our surgeons always strive to achieve the best possible results for each patient, complications can occur (while very rare) with any form of surgery. Our revision policy covers the patient for any complications incidental to our clinical care as well as any corrective revision surgery that may be required if the outcome we expected you to achieve wasn't at first realised. So whether you require further treatment as a result of an infection or wound problem or require an adjustment to achieve the expected result, Bella Vou include all of this care as part of our commitment to you.

### Cosmetic Dissatisfaction

Sometimes an unrealistic expectation might be formed as to the extent of what the procedure would achieve. This tends to be very rare as our world-class surgeons work hard to understand that the desired outcome you seek prior to surgery is realistic with what is medically possible for skin quality, BMI and other underlying factors. During the consultation(s) prior to surgery, the surgeon and the patient will establish what would likely be achievable based on that patient's unique physiology and their individual needs and desires. This would be termed a 'desirable outcome', if that result has not been met, then we would correct that for the patient without further a fee.

Herewith a few examples to help you understand where we would offer revision surgery.

- A breast augmentation patient who underwent breast surgery now has irregularly shaped breasts or who's breasts are not symmetrical in appearance.
- A patient who underwent a tummy tuck and liposuction to the flanks, whereas one flank is nicely contoured, the other has a bulge.
- A facelift patient who develops a pixie-ear deformity in the months following surgery.

With all such examples, Bella Vou would revise these without costs.

Herewith a few examples to help you understand that would not be covered under our revision policy.

- A facelift patient declines a recommendation by the surgeon to have liposuction to the neck as part of a face and neck lift procedure to remove some excess volume and to give the best result. Post surgery, the patient complains that their neck is not as tight as they would have expected. Whilst we can address this concern for the patient, the patient did not take the recommendation of the surgeon previously and now wants the neck tightening further as the neck is still full in appearance or has lax skin. A charge would be incurred for this additional treatment.
- A breast patient is advised by her surgeon to have an uplift in addition to having breast implants to improve the shape and appearance of her breasts. The patient only wants further volume by having implants as her budget is tight. Whilst the patient is happy with the size of her breasts post surgery, she is not happy with the overall appearance as the nipple position is low with less volume in the upper part of her breasts. A charge would be incurred to separately uplift the patient's breasts.
- A tummy tuck patient undergoes a tummy tuck procedure and whilst initially delighted with the result, she then goes on to have further unexpected children or has significant weight gain. The patient is unhappy that her tummy has developed loose skin and is not as flat as it previously was. We can further improve this patient's appearance but this would incur a fee.

#### In Summary

It is important to bear in mind that our surgeons agree on a 'desirable outcome' with the patient prior to the patient agreeing to any treatment. If the patient is in any way unhappy with the 'desirable outcome' put forward by the surgeon, they are under no obligation to proceed with the surgery.



Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions, queries or concerns.

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