



PLASTIC SURGERY AUSTIN
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Mommy Makeover

Introduction

While the joys of child-bearing are experienced far more directly by women than by men, so are the burdens. What is meant by the burdens of child-bearing? Pregnancy, while a beautiful experience also has negative consequences, its costs, if you will. As the child inside develops and enlarges, the increased size stretches the abdominal tissues surrounding it. Stretched beyond their elastic limits, beyond the ability to recoil back to their original dimensions, the tissues, the muscles, fascia (covering over the muscle), and the skin, are left looser and less supported than their pre-pregnancy state. Furthermore, it is believed that there are abdominal hormones during pregnancy whose purpose is to prepare the woman's body for the incredible act of delivering the baby by loosening and softening of tissues. Unfortunately, these loosening effects are not specific to the birth canal but affect the entirety of the woman's body and are not entirely reversible, often leaving a woman's body permanently changed following pregnancy. These changes are seen in the body but also in the face. This observation is addressed in the face section of the site.

Additionally, with pregnancy the breasts swell in preparation for and during milk production. Following the termination of breastfeeding, the breast swelling subsides but often the breasts do not return to their original form. They are often left with sagging from the stretching and loosening that occurred and smaller than their original state due to atrophy (loss of tissue) that occurs with the termination of breastfeeding.

In some cases, even with advances regarding equality in the workplace and at home, women still more often than not shoulder a greater amount of the child rearing duties than do men. While this is done out of love and with great satisfaction, it can leave women with less time to exercise and eat right. Thus many women who are raising children or who have raised children have never had the opportunity to lose the weight gained during pregnancy nor the time to re-strengthen and re-tone their tissues. And in many cases, the decreased opportunity to exercise leads to increased weight gain that stubbornly resists loss with future exercise and diet.

Problem

Thus the forces of loosening and starching of weight gain or even tissue loss in the case of breasts can leave a woman who has carried and raised her children out of love and selflessness feeling less like a woman, less feminine. The abdomen often has a pooch with looseness and

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stretch marks especially below the belly button. This fullness combined with laxity may creep to the sides and is experienced as a “muffin top” when clothes with a true waist are worn. The breasts are often deflated and sagging, not a fair reward for their vital past role in important process of nourishing a child.

Areas other than the abdomen and breasts are also affected by child bearing and rearing. The pubic areas, the triangle of tissue bearing the pubic hair, often becomes fuller and drops downward. Studies have even suggested that these changes reduce satisfaction associated with sexual activity. Those same studies imply that improvements in these areas associated with cosmetic surgery enhances satisfaction. C-section scars that are thick, stretched, uneven, or tethered down can also exacerbate the unattractive appearance of the abdomen that is sometimes the result of child-bearing.

Solution

Mommy Makeover is an umbrella term used to refer to a variety of procedure combinations designed to undo many the ravages experienced by a woman’s body due to the process of child-bearing and child-rearing. The most common combination referred to as mommy makeover is the abdominoplasty performed at the same time as a breast augmentation. Alternatively, abdominoplasty performed at the same time as a mastopexy (breast lift) is also a common form of mommy makeover. Finally, the third combination commonly dubbed a mommy makeover is the combination of an abdominoplasty with breast augmentation with mastopexy (breast implants with a breast lift). These three mommy makeover combinations are designed to address the two body regions most adversely impacted by being a mother: the breasts and abdomen. These combinations are intended to simultaneously flatten the abdomen, compress the waist, and raise the breasts and/or make them fuller. It should also be noted that an abdominoplasty is a perfect opportunity to correct or improve the appearance of an unfavorable C-section scar.

It should be noted that not all mothers need an abdominoplasty but many may benefit from liposuction of the abdomen. Thus, liposuction to the abdomen in combination with one of the afore-mentioned breast procedures can also be considered a mommy makeover. Special techniques for reducing the size of the pubic area and lifting it are employed during abdominoplasty to reduce the added fullness and sag.

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Patient Experience

One of the real highlights of the mommy makeover is the benefit of being able to have cosmetic improvements from two procedures with only one recovery. The overall length of recovery from a mommy makeover is not the length of recovery of two procedures added together. Quite the contrary, the recoveries overlap and thus it is as if there is only one recovery. The length and nature of the recovery, is generally determined by the abdominoplasty, if performed, because that has the more involved and longer recovery. Some patients are concerned about there being too much discomfort due to two procedures at once. However, with most patients this has not been a significant issue. It is as if the discomfort from the two procedures overlaps as well. Think of it this way there really is not a big difference between simply stubbing your toe and bumping your head while also stubbing your toe. Both experienced involve discomfort which is not really experienced as greater as or worse than when independent or combined.

Because a mommy makeover inherently involves two or more procedures, the combination increases surgical times. This important factor is always taken into account to create a patient experience that is characterized as safe. Attention to this a necessary components of a successful patient experience is always discussed with patients. Each patient is educated so they are empowered to be an active participant in this process.

In general, the recovery for a mommy makeover is 2-3 weeks. We ask that you take 10 days to 2 weeks off from work while you heal. You may need a drain or two to absorb the fluid you produce in the first several days following surgery. Drains are usually removed in 3-10 days.

Surgical supportive and compressive garments are worn after surgery to help your body absorb swelling and prevent further swelling. These garments will be discussed more in-depth at a later time and links will be provided to the garment best for you. They are worn for up to 6 weeks following surgery.

Heavy lifting or very strenuous exercise is restricted for 4-6 weeks depending on the exact procedure(s) you have. We will go over the restrictions with you specifically.

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Frequently Asked Questions

1. *How long will I have my drains?* Typically 5-7 days. Output should be less than 30cc during a 24 hr time period.
2. *How long do I need to wear a compression garment?* We typically recommend wearing the garment you are placed in at the time of surgery for 4-6 weeks. It is recommended you purchase two garments due to the length of time you will be spending in them. This allows one garment to be washed while you continuously wear them.
3. *When can I begin exercising?* You may walk at any point (we actually encourage you to walk right after surgery) but strenuous exercise where you may raise your blood pressure should not be done for 3 weeks. After that period, you may begin a brisk walk but true cardio and weight lifting should not be done until 4-6 weeks out from surgery to prevent damage to the abdominal repair that was completed.
4. *How long will swelling take to resolve?* Swelling typically begins to resolve in the first 2-3 weeks but can take a full 3 months before it's completely resolved.
5. *My abdomen and/or scars feel numb, is this normal?* Yes. Sensation changes right after surgery are very common. You may experience numbness or tingling all through the abdomen or even an itchy sensation that you just can't seem to scratch. In any case, the areas will return to normal sensation 6-9 months. You may always have a slight numb feeling to you belly button and/or right around your scarring.
6. *When will I get my final cosmetic breast result?* The breasts will settle and shape as the swelling resolves over the course of 12 weeks. You will notice a dramatic difference by 4 weeks and this continues to improve over the following months. They will ultimately be positioned in a more natural, yet still youthful and lifted position.
7. *How long do I have to wear the surgical bra and when can I buy regular bras?* You should wear the surgical bra until your surgeon advises that you may switch into a regular bra and this is typically at 4 weeks post-op depending on your healing. We advise patients to purchase new bras at 8-12 weeks out from surgery so that the sizing is accurate after all your swelling has resolved and your breasts have settled. If you would like to purchase one or two bras for the time period in between your surgical bras and the final fitting, you may do so but don't buy too many as your bra size may be less accurate in the beginning. Also, due to the healing incision lines, you might find that the



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underwire in most bras it's uncomfortable to wear at first. Once the incision has completely healed, though, this will not be a problem.

8. *My nipples or scars feel numb or hypersensitive, is this normal?* Yes. Sensation changes right after surgery are very common. You may experience numbness or tingling or it may be extra sensitive. Either way, the areas will return to baseline sensation within 3-6 months.
9. *When can I begin using scar treatment remedies like Mederma or silicone scar sheeting?* Scar treatment remedies are best used for 6-10 weeks after surgery. You may purchase Mederma at any pharmacy. ScarGuard and Scar Away are silicone bandages we also recommend; silicone bandages add compression onto the scar forcing it to flatten out.
10. *When can I drive?* You may drive when you are off pain medication and can safely and comfortably maneuver the car. Typically this is 10-14 days after surgery.
11. *When can I travel?* You may go on long car rides or fly on a plane at 2 weeks after surgery but you need to get up and walk around every 2-3 hours if possible and be careful not to lift over 15lbs.
12. *When can I get in a pool, submerged in a bathtub or go to the beach?* You may be submerged in water at 2 weeks post-op as long as you don't have any open wounds. It's best to wait for 1 month before going in hot tubs because they typically harbor more bacteria than pools. This goes for pools, lakes, and ocean water as well.
13. *When do I need my sutures (stitches) removed?* Internal sutures will dissolve on their own over 3-6 months and are internal. External sutures that will be removed around 14 days post-op. The sutures securing your drains are removed when the drains are pulled at 5-7 days after surgery.

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