

your stomach

Simple procedures can help to eliminate stubborn fatty deposits on the stomach and have you looking slim and svelte in no time.

The stomach is one of the areas where women tend to accumulate fat, even if the rest of the body is in perfect shape. This may be more noticeable in women who have had babies, or those who have lost a vast amount of weight but are finding it difficult to shift fat from stubborn areas. Ageing and dramatic weight loss can also result in sagging skin. Techniques such as abdominoplasty and liposculpture, or non-surgical options such as Thermage, can help create a sleek body contour. "Most commonly we find that women who've had two or more children and who might be thin otherwise, are left with a pouchy abdomen and fatty excess around the lower stomach and belly button," says plastic surgeon Dr Benjamin Norris from Silkwood Medical at Bondi Junction, Sydney. "We can modify the procedures we choose to perform in terms of the specific needs of the patient."

surgical options

ABDOMINOPLASTY

What is it? The stomach is lifted and 'tucked' to eliminate a pouchy abdomen or protruding belly. **What is involved?** An incision is made along the underwear line, skin and fat are removed and the rectus muscle is tightened. A modified tummy tuck can be performed on women who have localised fat just around the belly button. "Typically the skin is craggy and crepey, but the muscles haven't separated, so they don't need to be sewn

together," says Dr Norris. "It involves a lesser incision and is more gentle." **Results:** "This is a very effective procedure in the vast majority of patients who have it done," says Dr Norris. **Down time:** Abdominoplasty requires a three-night stay in hospital, while a modified procedure requires one night. The patient will need three weeks to recuperate and will need to wear a supportive

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ABDOMINAL LIPOSCULPTURE

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THE RESULTS



Abdominoplasty involves lifting and 'tucking' the stomach to get rid of a pouchy abdomen.

compression band for six weeks after the procedure to reduce swelling and bruising. "The abdomen will feel tight and uncomfortable for a few weeks. No heavy lifting, abdominal exercises, or contact sports can be undertaken for six weeks after the procedure. Swimming or light jogging is fine after two weeks.

COST: From \$6000 for a full tummy tuck, not including the anaesthetist or hospital costs. "Because this procedure attracts a Medicare item number, patients are generally eligible for a hospital rebate. "However it has to be more than one year and less than seven years after having their last child," says Dr Norris.

ABDOMINAL LIPOSCULPTURE

What is it? Disproportionate collections of fat are removed from the stomach via a surgical suction device in order to improve the proportion of the body and create a sleeker body contour. **What is involved?** The patient undergoes a full assessment to determine whether they're a suitable candidate for the procedure. "Liposculpture is all about the skin," explains Dr Norris. "If the skin has lost elasticity and is unlikely to retract back to the patient's new contours, there is no point doing the procedure."

The procedure itself takes about one-and-a-half hours and is performed under general anaesthetic. Small incisions are made in the groin, foot and around the belly button. "We can access most areas very well through these spots and the scars are well hidden," he says. A metal cannula is then inserted to remove fat in the offending areas. **Results:** "It's successful as long as you choose the

patient correctly and they are using it as a sculpting technique and not a weight loss tool. It works best on patients of average weight that have disproportionate collections of fat. Final results will become evident after three months. **Down time:** Many patients can go back to work the following day, although a few quiet days at home is recommended. Compression garments are worn both day and night for six weeks after the procedure, however, a brisk walk or light jog is okay after one week.

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THE RESULTS



Liposculpture is best for people who aren't overweight but have stubborn pockets of fat.