

NOVA
PLASTIC SURGERY

TAKING BACK YOUR PERFECT SHAPE:

A Guide To Tummy Tucks, Liposuction, and Coolsculpting

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Tummy Tucks	4
Liposuction.	6
Coolsculpting.....	8
Conclusion	9

Introduction

Many people think about having cosmetic procedures to improve the appearance and shape of their stomach. However, with a range of procedure options available, it is challenging to choose the right one for your unique situation. That's why we've created this comparison guide on tummy tucks, liposuction, and coolsculpting to help you understand your options and determine which may be best for you.

Key Things to Consider

We'll start by outlining a few key things to consider about all of the procedures. The most important thing to make note of is that, contrary to common misconception, none of the procedures are weight loss methods.

Other important considerations include:

- Only a board-certified plastic surgeon can make a true recommendation as to which procedure is the best fit based on your unique situation and goals.
- All of the procedures have vastly different recovery times, costs, potential complications, and results.
- Your overall health and medical history are important factors to consider when choosing a procedure—not everyone is a good candidate for surgery.

Comparing the Procedures

Next, we'll walk through all three procedures: what they treat, how they're performed, what the recovery process is like, and potential side effects.

Tummy Tucks

A [tummy tuck](#) is a safe, effective surgical procedure designed to improve the appearance of the abdomen by removing excess skin and repositioning the stomach. Because the procedure is highly customizable, full and mini tummy tuck options are available.

Full tummy tucks are best suited for treating a condition called diastasis recti, the separation of the abdominal muscles during pregnancy. This can be accomplished by tightening the abdominal muscles and removing excess skin, effectively improving the appearance of the abdomen and correcting the issue. In many cases, a full tummy tuck requires complete repositioning of the belly button—meaning a recovery time of up to six weeks.

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Mini tummy tucks are a less invasive surgical option for removing excess sagging skin. Unlike a full tummy tuck, a mini tummy tuck doesn't change the location of the belly button, and it requires a much smaller incision. Because they do not involve tightening of the abdominal muscles, mini tummy tucks also have a shorter recovery time.

The most common side effect of both full and mini tummy tucks is swelling; however, reactions to anesthesia, infection, bleeding, surgical site complications, and blood clots can all occur. The recovery process takes between 2-6 weeks, depending on whether you get a full or mini tummy tuck. As a general rule, patients should limit all strenuous activities for six weeks following a full or mini tummy tuck.

Liposuction

[Liposuction](#) is a surgical procedure designed to treat diet-resistant areas of fat that are disproportionate with the rest of the body. It works by removing stubborn fat cells that refuse to shrink on their own and don't respond to diet and/or exercise. It is important to remember that the purpose of liposuction is to remove excess fat and that it is not a weight loss method. Instead, liposuction—also called liposculpture—is intended to resculpt and improve the appearance of an area of the body.

A good candidate for liposuction with low risk of complications has firm skin, is not overweight, and is a non-smoker. Firm skin is important because patients with cellulite may not be good candidates because of skin quality. If you smoke, you'll need to stop for at least six weeks before and after the procedure to help achieve the desired results.

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Ideally, liposuction candidates will have reached their goal weight approximately six months before the procedure. The recovery process resembles post-workout soreness and typically includes some swelling and bruising that usually dissipates within a week. While recovering, patients should avoid vigorous physical activity until they're cleared by a physician.

After liposuction, fat cells removed from an area will not grow back—but that won't prevent you from gaining weight. The risks include reactions to anesthesia, infection, bleeding, skin discoloration, and changes in skin sensation. In some cases, a tummy tuck and liposuction will be done together to remove excess skin, reposition the abdomen, and target stubborn fat cells.



Coolsculpting

[Coolsculpting](#) is a nonsurgical, fat-freezing procedure that helps remove stubborn and resistant fat cells. It works by using a controlled cooling process to reduce the number of fat cells in a targeted area. The treatment feels like a noninvasive cooling sensation—with no anesthesia, injections, or traumatic suction required.

Like other approaches, coolsculpting is not a weight loss method; however, it achieves remarkable results without surgery. In fact, coolsculpting results in a 20 percent fat reduction in targeted areas, with little to no downtime and fewer associated risks. That said, coolsculpting is not entirely free of risks or side effects. It can cause temporary symptoms, such as redness, swelling, bruising, firmness, stinging, cramping, itching, and sensitivity. All of these side effects are temporary and typically resolve themselves within a few days or weeks at most.

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What Comes Next

There are different benefits and risks to each approach, and your unique situation will help determine the best option to achieve your goals. Another great way to compare tummy tucks, liposuction, and coolsculpting is to [look at the before and after photos](#) for each procedure to get a better idea of what the results are like. With the right research and the right expectations, you can narrow down your options and determine which one is probably the ideal route for you.

All that said, only a board-certified plastic surgeon can make an educated recommendation on the best procedure for you. If you're curious about the different procedures available to improve the appearance of the abdomen, let's talk. [Schedule a complimentary consultation](#) with [NOVA Plastic Surgery](#) to learn more about the different treatments and procedures we offer.



NOVA PLASTIC SURGERY

About NOVA Plastic Surgery

NOVA Plastic Surgery is a state-of-the-art facility located in Ashburn, Virginia. Fadi Nukta, MD, the founder and medical director of NOVA Plastic Surgery, is a top Northern Virginia hand surgeon and plastic surgeon, specializing in trauma plastic surgery and hand surgery.

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