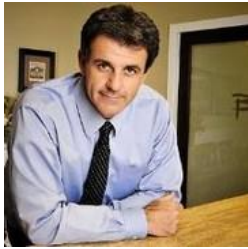


Pain management following a tummy tuck procedure



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It's normal for people who are considering an abdominoplasty, more commonly known as a tummy tuck, to be concerned about pain management following the surgery. Some might hear from friends or other family members who have gone through the procedure that

the postoperative discomfort were quite significant, even with oral pain medication.

The good news is that over the years, pain management has become more progressive which means patients have been able to benefit from less postoperative aches and pains.

San Diego tummy tucks are a popular surgery, so it's important for **La Jolla plastic surgeons** and those in the immediate surrounding areas, to educate their patients on the options available regarding postoperative pain management.

Cosmetic surgeons don't want their patients to be in unnecessary discomfort, especially in the early postoperative period of an abdominoplasty.

Following surgery, when patients are ready, the goal is to have them on their feet and ambulatory, even if it's just a few steps, the day after surgery.

Here are three options to discuss with your plastic surgeon, all which are done under general anesthesia:

1. **Local Anesthetic Pump:** Delivered by means of a catheter, local anesthesia is sent to the surgical site to where the muscles were stitched or brought together. These pumps and tubes remain for a few days and tiny amounts of anesthesia are delivered on an ongoing basis.
2. **TAP Block:** A TAP block delivers local anesthesia into the abdominal wall muscles and can be executed either on the field during the surgery or immediately afterwards. A TAP block, anesthetizes the intercostal nerves that supply the abdominal wall. A TAP block can be used with the conventional local anesthesia which lasts four hours, or a longer lasting anesthesia called Exparel, which lasts up to three days.
3. **One-Stick:** Immediately prior to the induction of anesthesia, is to perform a one-stick spinal anesthetic, using a long-lasting opiate. This provides excellent pain control for roughly 18 hours after surgery. It's important for patients to realize that the one-stick offers less intraoperative pain so less general anesthesia is used. This means when a patient awakens, there is less nausea, and they wake up more lucid and in less pain. More times than not, patients ambulate more rapidly, sometimes that evening or the very next morning. And long after the spinal blocker has worn off some patients still require less pain meds. Theoretically, this is due to how the pain path is set up prior to surgery. However, the one-stick does mandate that the patient spends one night in the hospital.

The methods of pain management in regards to cosmetic procedures, particularly with tummy tucks, have advanced dramatically over time. It also empowers patients to educate themselves on what method is best along with the guidance from their plastic surgeon.

While cosmetic surgery is considered a journey, it is also one that can be easily managed when it comes to minimizing discomfort.