

# PATRONELLA

*True Form* PLASTIC SURGERY®

★★★★★  
AMERICA'S BEST  
PLASTIC  
SURGEONS  
2024

Newsweek

statista

“I can play joyfully with my twins on the beach, wearing whatever swimsuit I want and not give any thought to my tummy. My former self and my current self have been reconciled!”

- Kelly

*True Form Tummy Tuck® patient of Dr. Patronella*

The *True Form* Tummy Tuck®

“I think my tummy actually looks better now than it did before, if that’s even possible after twins! I found myself on South Beach, absolutely comfortable in my own skin, present and happy with my young boys, while wearing an itty bitty string bikini! Dr. P had done it! I had wanted my body restored, and there I was back in model form!”

- Kelly

*International model and True Form Tummy Tuck® patient of Dr. Patronella*



Kelly, before and after her True Form Tummy Tuck® with Dr. Patronella



# KEY ELEMENTS OF THE TRUE FORM TUMMY TUCK®



## 1. LOW-SCAR POSITIONING

Dr. Patronella uses a precise system of measurements to calculate ideal low placement of the incision. The subsequent scar can be concealed beneath many underwear and 2-piece swimsuit styles.

## 2. 3-D CONTOURING

### (Anatomy Defining Progressive Suture Technique)

Dr. Patronella creates soft muscle definition via a combination of strategic fat removal and an anatomy-defining internal suture technique. This variation in abdominal fat thickness and deep suture enhancement replicates the depth nuances that a naturally-beautiful abdomen possesses.

## 3. 360° HARMONY

To ensure overall aesthetic harmony, the proportions and skin tone of regions adjacent to the abdomen, particularly the hip and waist, are blended to complement the abdomen's appearance. This prevents artificial-looking contrasts such as a well-toned, contoured abdomen next to a thick waistline or a bulging mons pubis. Frequently, Dr. Patronella performs liposuction to slim the waist and other areas to achieve more ideal contours.

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*The waist and hips are a critical element in ensuring the abdomen has an attractive appearance. If you created a nice abdomen, but you are inattentive to the appearance of the waist, it will be obvious that the look was surgically created.”*

*- Dr. Chris Patronella*

## 4. BALANCED STRUCTURE AND SKIN TONE

During pregnancy, the pressure of the growing uterus upon the abdominal muscle wall causes it to weaken, which allows the muscles to separate (diastasis recti). Since these muscles help to hold the abdomen in, many women have a

tummy pooch as a result of the loss of this natural internal support, even though they may be within their ideal weight range. A woman can determine the presence of diastasis by doing a sit-up or abdominal crunch and visualizing a tenting effect or bulge in the midline of the abdomen around the belly button. Dr. Patronella repairs the muscle wall, using internal sutures to tighten the stretched tissue, bringing the rectus muscles back together equally for both the upper and lower abdomen, restoring the pre-pregnancy condition. This correction cannot be achieved through exercise.

In addition, balanced restoration of skin tone for both the upper and lower abdomen repairs skin laxity, creating a more authentic appearance. If correction of these elements is concentrated on the lower abdomen and neglected in the upper region, a taut lower abdomen will often result, providing a stark contrast with the looser skin and unrepaired diastasis of the upper abdomen. This is often seen with mini tummy tuck surgery.

## 5. DEEP, SHAPELY NAVEL

Pregnancy and weight gain both commonly stretch out the navel and turn it into an “outie.” Traditional abdominoplasty patients often complain of “surgical-looking” belly buttons that can appear donut-shaped, too wide, or slit-like.

Dr. Patronella avoids these pitfalls through a 6-step process he developed 20 years ago. The result is an inconspicuous, natural-looking belly button which is widely considered the aesthetic ideal: a deep, firm navel with a subtle vertical shape.

## 6. MONS PUBIC REJUVENATION

It is common for the mons pubis (the hair-bearing pubic area) to accumulate fat and become less toned as a result of pregnancy. Dr. Patronella is attentive to this detail, tightening lax skin and removing excess fatty deposits so that the pubic area smoothly blends with the abdomen.

## 7. PRECISION

Dr. Patronella assesses and removes excess skin toward the completion of his True Form Tummy Tuck® procedure,

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*Tummy tucks historically have produced a straight board-like look. It was ‘take out as much skin as you can, pull it tight, and sew it up.’ These patients’ tummies were flat and smooth, but they lacked the natural character and subtle definition of the muscle features and variation in tissue depth that can be seen on a youthful, toned abdomen.*

*“The True Form Tuck® is a culmination of the steps I began incorporating into the abdominoplasty procedure to perfect it, using a combination of techniques I have refined and unified through many years of experience. It reflects my objective to restore the abdomen in a way that is authentic to the naturally-created abdomen, in contrast to an uninspired uniformly flat appearance which lacks the abdomen’s natural character and beauty.”*

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in contrast to traditional tummy tuck methods in which this step is performed at the beginning for convenience. His approach follows lifting the skin and repairing abdominal wall structure and fat reduction, allowing him to more accurately determine the true amount of excess skin remaining. Tissue thickness is then equalized above and below the incision, ensuring a smooth transition at the final scar position. This avoids sunken scars with an unsightly “step-off.” In addition, this helps prevent excessive tension upon the incision line that may cause wound separation or thickened scars once healing occurs.

## 8. NO DRAINS

Traditional tummy tuck surgery requires drains, sometimes in place for weeks, to remove natural body fluid that can accumulate after the procedure. Dr. Patronella uses progressive tension sutures to close up the spaces where this fluid may accumulate, avoiding the need for his patients to wear bulky, uncomfortable drain tubes following surgery.

To further enhance comfort, Dr. Patronella offers his patients an injection of a 3-day anesthetic (Exparel) performed during surgery. Most patients who have this injection find their pain more manageable and feel more comfortable getting up and around following surgery, which ultimately accelerates recovery.

## 9. SCAR TREATMENT

To further improve patients’ aesthetic results, Dr. Patronella implements a Scar Recovery Program. With this regimen, which begins six weeks after their tummy tuck procedure and continues for 6 to 12 months, patients apply a series of topical products selected by Dr. Patronella to diminish the appearance of the abdominoplasty scar. To produce optimal results, patients frequently combine the Scar Recovery Program with a series of scar-diminishing laser treatments in Dr. Patronella’s medical spa.



Actual True Form Tummy Tuck® patient of Dr. Patronella

# IS TUMMY TUCK SURGERY RIGHT FOR ME?

If you’ve tried everything: cutting carbs, doing cardio and crunches, and still you have loose skin and a tummy bulge that won’t budge, there’s a likely reason why. While dieting and exercise are effective to reduce fat and tone the muscles, they cannot make loose skin firm and smooth again or tighten up a weakened abdominal muscle wall—characteristics which typically are the result of pregnancy, heredity, or moderate weight gain followed by weight loss.

The good news is you don’t have to live with a permanent tummy pooch and stretched-out skin. Through his True Form Tummy Tuck® procedure, Dr. Patronella will restore a toned, contoured look to your abdomen so that you can wear figure-revealing jeans, tops, dresses and bikinis with confidence.

# TESTIMONIALS

“Having two children left my abdomen very loose, and I had a bulging stomach. I had to spend time each day trying to figure out what to wear to conceal it. I reached a point where I was fed up trying to look good in the clothes I was wearing, and I wanted to wear a bikini again.

“As a physician myself, I was impressed with Dr. Patronella, who was recommended to me by a hospital administrator. There was no hype. I knew in my gut that he was not trying to sell anything. I chose to have a tummy tuck, liposuction on my thighs, and a breast augmentation.

“I have never had an abdomen like this, even before children; it’s magazine style! It’s nice and flat, and I can wear anything now. It has done amazing things for my self esteem.

“After the swelling went down, I was wearing clothing that was more revealing. Before surgery, I was more covered up. Random people would comment on my appearance, and people seemed to gravitate more to me, maybe because my confidence level went up.

“I think, emotionally, I’m amazed at the impact it had on me. I feel like I am more myself with no self-doubt. After a decade, my husband and I started going dancing. We enjoy life. He says, ‘happy mom, happy kids, happy wife, happy life!’

“Although I had the respect professionally, this confidence has opened up my social life in new ways. And this summer, I’ve been so confident in a bikini.”

*Patient, mother of two and a physician, Missouri City, Texas*

“When they were changing my postoperative bandages, the nurses exclaimed, ‘You have the tummy of a teenager!’ My abdomen looks like a fitness trainer’s. I have toned abs, definition, and it’s so tight, it’s unbelievable. I have a flat, toned belly.”

*Patient, mother of three, Humble, Texas*

“The first tummy tuck I had with another doctor was a horrible experience. The incision left an indentation that was noticeable even beneath clothes. I felt deformed. I was scared to have tummy tuck surgery a second time, but I didn’t want to go through life with an unnatural-looking abdomen.

“I am so happy I met Dr. Patronella. He corrected the problem by doing fat grafting to fill the indentation. He did liposuction on my back, and he also took fat from my waist to contour it.

“Everything he did was wonderful. My family doctor was so impressed with results, she asked for Dr. Patronella’s contact information as a resource for other patients.”

*Patient, mother of two, Houston, Texas*

Dr. Patronella is such an awesome man and doctor. He’s been so blessed with such a talent. He has the eye to sculpt a woman’s body that not many doctors have - that’s what makes him unique in what he does. His professionalism and talent builds his unique character and personality. He treated me like I was the only person on earth, and I love everything he did for me.”

*Patient, fitness trainer, and mother of three, Missouri City, Texas*

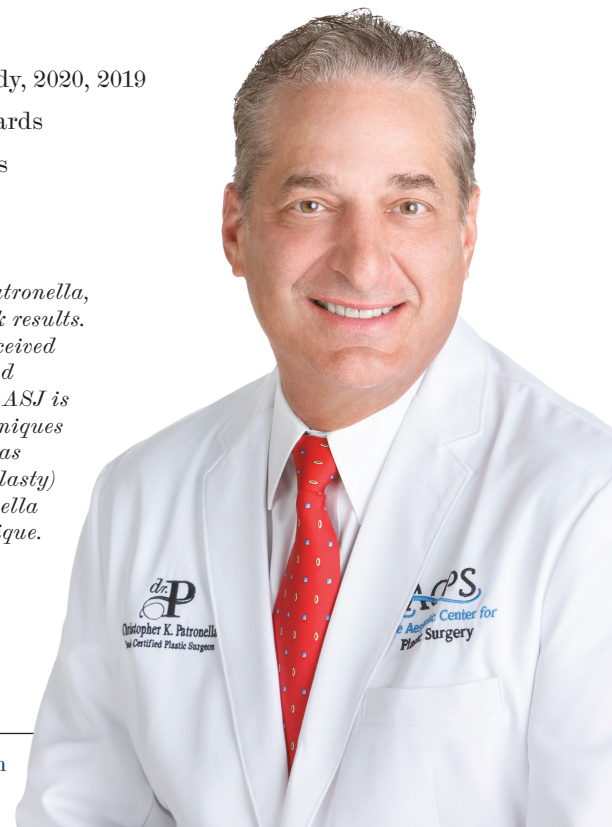
## PLASTIC SURGEON DR. CHRIS PATRONELLA

### AWARDS

- One of “America’s Best Plastic Surgeons” - Newsweek, 2024, 2023, 2022, 2021
- Voted One of “The Ultimate 100 Global Aesthetic Leaders” - MyFaceMyBody, 2020, 2019
- Winner: “Surgical Makeover of the Year - Face” - 2019, MyFaceMyBody awards
- Winner: “Male Plastic Surgeon of 2018-South U.S.” - MyFaceMyBody awards
- Winner: “Best Aesthetic Practice” in Texas - 2016, MyFaceMyBody awards
- Texas Super Doctors Hall of Fame - 2018 - present, Texas Monthly

*With the objective to create more alluring, authentic-looking abdominoplasty results, Dr. Patronella, more than 20 years ago, gradually incorporated technical refinements to perfect tummy tuck results. His efforts culminated in his signature “True Form Tummy Tuck®” procedure, which has received worldwide acclaim. Dr. Patronella’s innovative abdominoplasty approach was the “Featured Operative Technique” in the prestigious Aesthetic Surgery Journal (ASJ) in Nov./Dec. 2015. ASJ is a peer-reviewed international journal focusing on scientific developments and clinical techniques in aesthetic surgery. In addition, International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery News has twice singled out Dr. Patronella’s True Form Tummy Tuck® in issues featuring abdominoplasty advances around the globe. Over the course of nearly 20 years from 2000 to 2020, Dr. Patronella has performed more than 2500 abdominoplasties using his True Form Tummy Tuck® technique.*

*As one of plastic surgery’s most respected leaders, Dr. Patronella is an in-demand speaker at plastic surgery conferences both in the U.S. and abroad, where he enjoys sharing the techniques he has developed to advance plastic surgery safety and outcomes. Women and men travel from all across the globe for surgery with Dr. Patronella at his state-of-the-art, accredited private surgery center in Houston, Texas.*







PATRONELLA

True Form PLASTIC SURGERY®

## TUMMY TUCK & BODY CONTOURING RECOVERY GUIDE

Congratulations on taking the exciting step to enhance your look through tummy tuck and/or body contouring surgery. This guide will provide you with helpful information typical of recovery for many patients, while also recognizing that each patient is unique, and recovery may vary. Those in better physical condition and closer to ideal body weight are more likely to experience a faster recovery.

In the initial weeks after your surgery, you will be sore and more swollen than usual as your body heals. But as swelling diminishes, your abdomen's new contours will become fully visible—most patients can see a dramatic difference within 6 weeks after surgery—and you will enjoy the satisfaction of having a beautifully-contoured, smooth, flat abdomen and the added confidence that goes with it. Yet, in all, resolution of minor, intermittent swelling and improvement in contour definition will continue for 6 months or more, finally revealing the full effect of the procedure. Abdominal exercise beginning at 3 months will strengthen the previously weakened abdominal rectus muscles, enhance anatomical contour, and accelerate this process.

The amount of time it takes to resume basic activities following body contouring surgery varies depending upon the extent of abdominal repair required and each patient's physical condition:

- 10 - 14 days for a tummy tuck that includes repair of the muscle wall
- 7 - 10 days for a tummy tuck with no muscle wall repair

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### Dr. Patronella's Optimal Recovery Guide For Tummy Tuck Surgery

Prior to your surgery, Dr. Patronella and his staff will provide you with detailed information to help you prepare for your tummy tuck surgery and recovery. We will review a packet of information with you which covers topics such as preparations to follow before surgery; medications, herbs, and supplements to avoid; and instructions for the postoperative period.

As an additional helpful resource, Dr. Patronella has created this recovery guide that will lead you step-by-step through the recovery process and provide you with guidelines to follow regarding exercise, activities, diet, and incision care.

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### *Important Point*

*To prevent lower extremity blood clots, it is very important that you take slow 10-minute walks every two hours, except while you sleep, starting on the day after your surgery. Likewise, flexing and extending your feet at the ankles while resting also promotes improved circulation in the calves.*

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While this guide is comprehensive, most patients will have some questions after surgery that may not have been anticipated. We are always available during your recovery to assist you with any questions or concerns you may have. You may reach us by calling our office at 713.799.9999



## PREPARATION FOR TUMMY TUCK SURGERY

These recommendations have a specific purpose such as reducing the risk of bleeding (herbal supplements, aspirin, Advil, etc.), blood clots (estrogen hormones, smoking), and wound healing complications (smoking, vaping, nicotine use).

**1.** Continue (or begin) conditioning exercise such as aerobic exercise, yoga, Pilates, swimming, or weight training. Strengthening your body through aerobic exercise will enable you to recover from surgery more quickly.

**2.** Begin a high-protein diet that includes foods such as lean chicken, fish, eggs, beans, and protein shakes. Protein enables your body to more effectively heal wounds.

**3. NO SMOKING for one month before surgery and one month after surgery.** There should be NO SMOKING/VAPING/NICOTINE USE by you or anyone confined with you in any closed environment during this period. Smoking significantly compromises blood flow to incisions and increases the likelihood of complications such as skin death, wound separation and poor scarring.

**4.** To reduce your risk of lower extremity blood clots, stop birth control pills or hormone replacement therapy, including topical or vaginal estrogen creams, for one month before and one month after surgery.

**5.** To avoid excessive bleeding during and after surgery, avoid aspirin and other over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medications such as Advil or Aleve (for a full list, contact my office), aspirin, alcohol, and herbal supplements for two weeks before and two weeks after surgery.

**6.** Avoid contact with ill family members for 2 weeks before surgery.

**7.** To lessen infection risk, do not shave the pubic area for one week before surgery.

**8.** To aid in wound healing and lessen bruising and swelling, begin taking the VitaMedica Recovery Support vitamins that are provided to you 2 weeks before surgery.

**9.** Patients will require assistance for the first 4 to 5 days after surgery and should not be left unattended.

### • RECOVERY TIPS FROM A PATIENT'S PERSPECTIVE

For at least 1 - 2 weeks following your tummy tuck procedure, it will be important for you to pamper and care for yourself and to allow others to as well. If you're a busy mom who is used to caring for others and running a busy household, it can be tough to switch gears to be on the receiving end of care. However, as one tummy tuck patient and mother of grown children advised, "Be kind to yourself and rest." Doing so will speed your recovery and help you to return to your normal daily routine feeling more refreshed and renewed.

1. If you have young children, you will want to arrange for help to care for them for at least 7 - 10 days.

2. Some patients plan to have a cleaning service come to their homes prior to their surgery and/or while they are recuperating.

3. Consider preparing or purchasing meals ahead of time that can be frozen and reheated.

### • ITEMS TO HAVE ON HAND PRIOR TO YOUR SURGERY

1. **Loose, soft clothing such as yoga pants or sweatpants** - You'll temporarily be more swollen than usual, so loose clothing will be most comfortable. Also you'll want to avoid clothes with a snug waistband that could potentially irritate your incision.

2. **Antibacterial soap for your hands, antibacterial body wash and alcohol-based hand sanitizer** - This will be important to help prevent infection of your incision. In addition, use a hand sanitizer regularly between washes.

3. **Books, magazines, a laptop** - These are nice to have on hand while you are recuperating and taking it easy.

4. **Laxatives such as MiraLAX and Dulcolax** - A side effect of pain medication, constipation is common the first week following surgery.

5. **A big water bottle** - You will need to ensure you drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice to help you stay hydrated—at least 8 cups a day or 16 cups if you have liposuction in conjunction with a tummy tuck.

6. Clean linens and towels; absorbent pads for the bed or recliner

7. Step stool to make it easier to get in and out of a high bed and a shower seat

8. Recliner for ideal positioning and ease of getting up and down

### • THE DAY BEFORE TUMMY TUCK SURGERY

1. To reduce constipation after surgery, eat a liquid diet, and have a bowel movement, even if a laxative or Fleet's enema is required.

2. To reduce the risk of infection, thoroughly cleanse with antiseptic soap at least the night before and the morning of surgery. Areas of most concern include the armpits, genitalia, anal areas, and under the fingernails.

3. If you are anxious, take the Xanax prescribed (or sleeping medication) to sleep, before 12 midnight (10 p.m. is best).

### • SURGERY DAY

On the night before surgery, have nothing at all to eat or drink after midnight. Do not chew gum.

Dr. Patronella strongly recommends the use of Exparel, a long acting (approximately 72 hours) local anesthetic injection performed in surgery, to assist in postoperative pain management and a more comfortable experience. Please ask about this option. In addition, Dr. Patronella employs a technique (Progressive Tension Sutures) for all body contouring procedures that eliminates the need for uncomfortable drains, improving mobility and further reducing pain.



## • EVENING AFTER SURGERY

1. Many patients take advantage of an overnight stay in our fully accredited facility for attentive and prompt care during the early post-op period.

2. Sequential Compression Devices (SCDs) will be kept on the legs overnight to reduce the risk of blood clots and to eliminate the need to get out of bed for a walk that evening.

3. To reduce blood clot risk, many patients (if deemed clinically appropriate) will be given an injectable or oral blood thinner beginning the morning after surgery.

4. When staying overnight, dressing and garment change will occur between 5 a.m. - 6 a.m. the morning after surgery. For those who are recovering at home, an experienced ACPS medical provider will assist with dressing and garment change during the home visit the next day.

5. Discharge from our surgery center will occur at about 7 a.m.

## • DAYS 1-3 AFTER TUMMY TUCK SURGERY

1. During surgery, a long-acting, non-narcotic local anesthetic injection (Exparel) can be performed. This will reduce discomfort, though it will not eliminate it completely. Pain medication will be required, and it is better to take it and get up and around than to lay in bed all day avoiding movement for fear of pain.

2. Getting out of bed and walking with assistance for 10-15 minutes every two hours during normal waking hours is critically important to speed recovery and reduce the risk of blood clots.

3. While challenging due to abdominal discomfort, it is important to expand the lungs fully with conscientious deep breathing exercises regularly while awake. Beginning on the second day after surgery, you may shower with assistance using an antiseptic soap such as Dial. As an option, **Sylke**<sup>®</sup> topical hypoallergenic incision cover can be applied to your incision(s) at the time of your surgery. This mesh adhesive wound cover will provide support for your incision's healing while creating a watertight seal to help prevent infection. Please shower and let the water run over the incision(s), but do not rub or apply any soaps, creams, and/or ointments to the incision(s). Simply blot dry after showering. This will allow the **Sylke**<sup>®</sup> to stay on for up to a month after surgery. If **Sylke**<sup>®</sup> is not used, application of **DERMABOND**<sup>®</sup> **PRINEO**<sup>®</sup> or **STERI-STRIPS** (provided by us) can provide incisional protection as well and be treated the same while showering. Steri-Strips may be changed every 4-5 days.

The shower should be equipped with a stable plastic sitting stool, and A hand-held shower head if possible. You should NOT be left alone in the shower, as it is common to experience light-headedness and unsteadiness. Bathtub showers are difficult to get in and out of, and should be avoided during your recovery.

4. For those incisions that are not covered with **Sylke**<sup>®</sup> or Steri-Strips, simply clean with hydrogen peroxide or mild antiseptic soap and water, apply Bacitracin ointment and a sterile dressing. To avoid straining the incision line, walking in a slightly flexed (stooped) position at the hips is required for 4 to 5 days, gradually becoming more upright each day.

5. Flexion and extension of the feet at the ankles activates the calf muscles and pumps blood out of the legs, reducing the risk of blood clots. This should be done consistently throughout the day while awake.

6. Eating a light diet of foods that are easily digestible (to avoid constipation), high in protein (improves wound healing), and low in salt (reduces swelling) is ideal. Avoid foods in cans or packages (high in salt).

7. An ACPS certified home health care provider will come to your place of stay in Houston on the second and third days after surgery to assist and teach wound care and dressing change.

8. Constipation is common, especially when using pain medication. We advise regular use of laxatives for the first week or so and drinking plenty of water (at least 8 to 12 cups a day). If constipation persists, over the counter Magnesium

## RECOVERY TIP FROM A PATIENT'S PERSPECTIVE

*"During the first week of my recovery after tummy tuck surgery, I was wondering if I had done the right thing. But after the first week, I turned a corner—it got better and better."*

- A., Missouri City, TX

Citrate is the best treatment.

9. Alternating or adjusting resting positions is helpful to avoid muscle stiffness and tightness. Shifting from side to side with the hips flexed in the bed (with assistance) is recommended. Avoid sitting in hard chairs.

## • DAYS 3-5 AFTER TUMMY TUCK SURGERY

1. Gradually increasing light activity is recommended.

Walking without assistance for 15 minutes every two hours and improving posture should be pursued.

2. A family member should have been trained to assist with dressing changes once daily by now, usually done after a shower.

3. You may still need assistance when showering.

4. It is advisable to shower after bowel movements to reduce infection risk.

5. Avoiding contact with animals reduces the risk of infection.

6. Avoiding contact with ill family members is mandatory.

7. Eat a high-protein diet with limited salt intake.

8. Bending down isn't advisable. If you must reach down for something, squat/use your thighs.

## • DAYS 5-7 AFTER TUMMY TUCK SURGERY

1. You will become progressively more mobile with about 30 percent of your time spent up and about in the home engaging in light activities such as walking, sitting, flexing at the knees and hips, and limited household duties.

2. No driving or exercising is allowed.

3. It is normal to have a slight stoop while walking, progressing to a fully upright standing position by 7 days. Standing upright will help to alleviate back pain.

4. Incisions are covered with **Sylke**<sup>®</sup> or Steri-Strips (special paper tape). Do not apply ointment to areas covered by **Sylke**<sup>®</sup> or Steri-Strips.

5. Most sutures (stitches) are dissolvable; only a few suture tags require removal, 7-10 days after surgery.

## • DAYS 7-10 AFTER TUMMY TUCK SURGERY

1. Fully upright walking is expected, though it may be slightly tight and uncomfortable initially.

2. Leaving the home to attend indoor activities is encouraged. Riding in a car is acceptable but should be limited to no more than 30 minutes at a time. Lengthy rides in a car or on a plane can predispose a postoperative patient to blood clots and should be avoided.

3. Walking for 2 to 4 blocks (15-30 minutes) at a slow pace twice a day in cool temperatures is encouraged.

## • DAYS 10-14 DAYS AFTER TUMMY TUCK SURGERY

1. Increasing walks to half a mile twice a day (30-45 minutes) in cool temperatures improves mobility and prepares you for your return to work.

2. Usually a minimum of 10 full days of recovery is required before you can return to work with light duty restrictions: no lifting, stooping, prolonged standing (two hours or more), physical exertion, or strenuous activity.

3. If you did not elect to use **Sylke**<sup>®</sup>, continue incisional care with twice weekly application of new Steri-Strips as long as there is no skin irritation.

4. Applying a soothing moisturizer (vitamin E, aloe, etc.) to your skin after showers helps relieve dryness that is common after surgery.

5. Driving is allowed at the 12-14 day point if you are fully mobile, have good torso turning ability, and do not require pain medication.



## • WEEKS 2-4 AFTER TUMMY TUCK SURGERY

1. Exercise is limited to brisk walking or a stationary bicycle for 45 - 60 minutes. Be careful to avoid straining or lifting.
2. Travel should be limited to short trips of no more than one hour in a plane or car. Advise your doctor regarding travel plans for additional recommendations. (Anti-coagulation medication)
3. Second-stage garments are often started to reduce swelling after surgery.
4. Do not alarmed by noticeable dimpling in surgical areas; this is caused by internal dissolvable sutures, destined to disappear over several months.
5. A belly button-shaping foam plug (swim ear plug) will be used for a 6-8 weeks after surgery.

## • WEEKS 4-6 AFTER TUMMY TUCK SURGERY

1. Patients are beginning to feel pretty good by now, so the tendency is to push harder with physical activity. The key to avoiding a setback is to progress slowly and cautiously. Keeping the exercise routine to about 50 -75 percent of what you feel you are capable of is prudent at this juncture.
2. While increasing aerobic exercise with walking, stationary bicycle, or elliptical trainer, proceed with caution, avoiding abdominal straining at all times. Light upper body weights for toning is acceptable as long as there is minimal abdominal work required.
3. Swimming may begin as long as you have no wound healing issues.
4. Travel in a plane or car should be limited to two hours, with a short walk at the midway point to ensure good venous circulation in the legs. Use of blood thinning, anti-coagulation medication (Eliquis) is advised for travel.
5. Dr. Patronella's medical assistants will remove your **Sylke**®.
6. Begin Dr. Patronella's Scar Therapy Program. Several products are used to optimize the appearance of the scar. Treatment is required for at least 6-12 months depending on scar responsiveness. Consistent use and patience is essential.

## • WEEKS 6-12 AFTER TUMMY TUCK SURGERY

1. Progressively increasing exercise tolerance to full capacity is acceptable as long as it is reached gradually. You may begin incorporating more strenuous exercises such as aerobic exercise, jogging, Pilates and yoga. Isolated abdominal exercise (sit-ups, crunches, etc.) are not allowed until a full 12 weeks from the date of surgery has been reached. Light weightlifting can proceed with caution, avoiding any abdominal straining until the full 12-week mark.
2. Travelling more than two hours in a plane or car is acceptable, as long as a short walk is taken every hour during the trip. An aisle seat for plane travel is advised. Long flights over 4 hours are not advisable until 3 months after surgery. Dr. Patronella will prescribe anti-coagulation medication during any travel within 3 months of surgery.

## • THE TUMMY TUCK SCAR

In a tummy tuck procedure, an incision is most commonly made from one hip to the other. To diminish the appearance of the scar, Dr. Patronella incorporates a Scar Therapy Program into the postoperative care of his tummy tuck patients. The products in this regimen are designed to provide an optimal healing environment for the scar in order to soften its appearance.

The tummy tuck scar will continue to fade over a period of one to two years, sometimes longer. To prevent darkening of the scar, avoid sun exposure for one year, or liberally apply sunscreen to the exposed scar.

## • DR. P'S SCAR THERAPY PROGRAM

Careful attention to early incisional treatment and the resulting scar can make a dramatic difference in its appearance. **Sylke**® applied to your incision during surgery provides good protection and support for the early incision. Once the **Sylke**® is removed, you will begin the Scar Therapy Program.

1. **Retinol or Retin-A** - Applied nightly to cleansed skin on the scar, a retinol product such as SkinMedica's Tri-Retinol Complex is an exfoliant for the scar surface, reducing thickness and unwanted pigmentation. Retinol should not be used until 5-6 weeks after surgery to reduce the chance of irritation. This product will often cause dryness with flaking and irritation, requiring supplemental moisturizers such as vitamin E/aloe. If the skin irritation is severe, discontinuation for a brief 2 - 3 day interval is required. Some patients will only tolerate an every other night application.

2. **Silicone Gel or sheets** - Applied nightly over the retinol and in the morning over a moisturizer (vitamin E/aloe), silicone gel assists in flattening scars and sealing in natural oils to maintain skin hydration and conditioning.

3. **BIO CREAM Overnight Moisturizing Cream** This potent cream contains growth factors, antioxidants and matrix proteins, including collagen to boost skin's firmness, elasticity and brightness.

## ADDITIONAL PRODUCTS MAY INCLUDE:

**Vitamin C/E in silicone carrier** - A skin care product containing vitamins C and E, such as SkinMedica's Vitamin C+E Complex is a good alternative for those intolerant of retinol, or as a substitute. Vitamin C acts as an exfoliant, reducing surface scar and pigmentation, while vitamin E is a conditioner/moisturizer.

**Hydroquinone 4% -6%** - A strong bleaching agent, this product may be required in those patients who have a greater tendency to hyperpigment. This is commonly seen in darker skinned people (Black, Hispanic, Asian, Indian, Middle Eastern, etc.) and requires early attention to prevent hyperpigmentation.

**Scar Recovery Gel with Centelline** - A blend of patented therapeutic ingredients clinically-proven to reduce scar visibility.

## • RECOVERY SUPPORT

### Home Health Visit

As part of this exclusive service, patients recovering in the Houston area are offered a private visit to their homes or hotel accommodations a day or two after their surgery from one of Dr. Patronella's nurses or medical assistants. This experienced care provider will change your bandages, educate your caregiver in providing appropriate care techniques, and provide Dr. Patronella with an update on your recovery.

### Therapeutic Massage

This gentle massage provides the following benefits:

- Stimulate the lymphatic system to reduce bruising and swelling
- Help you to regain your flexibility and range-of motion
- Stimulate nerve-endings to diminish numbness and discomfort

### NuEra®

As one of our favorite post-surgical procedures, NuEra® uses radiofrequency to non-invasively heat the skin to a targeted temperature, causing gradual softening of scar tissue for enhanced post-surgical results in areas of liposuction. Many patients describe the treatment as being similar to a "hot-stone massage." It is not painful or unpleasant. Best results are typically achieved through four treatments spaced one week apart.

### VitaMedica's Recovery Support Program

Taken for two weeks prior to surgery and two weeks after, VitaMedica's Recovery Support program is formulated to speed wound healing, support the immune system, prevent infection, minimize inflammation, and reduce bruising. Recognized for their beneficial role in the healing process, the program's nutrients include vitamin A, vitamin C, copper, selenium, bioflavonoids, bromelain, quercetin, and homeopathic Arnica Montana.