

# Ask the Plastic Surgeons

By Wendell Smoot, MD, FACS and John Smoot, MD, FACS

**Q.** What is a "Mommy Makeover" and what kind of a result could I expect from it?

**A.** The Mommy Makeover is actually a series of plastic surgery procedures that help to restore a woman's physique to pre-pregnancy conditions. Childbearing is a very rewarding experience for most women but it alters the female body in many areas. On average, most women gain 25 to 35 pounds during pregnancy and this weight is stored as fatty tissue in the breasts, abdomen, hips, lower back, buttocks and thighs. The breasts enlarge due to preparation for nursing and the abdomen expands as the baby grows.

Many new mothers lose the excessive weight gained during pregnancy but find that the abdominal muscles have weakened and excess abdominal fat results in a bulging of the belly. Furthermore, once a woman finishes breastfeeding, the breasts deflate and begin to sag. In general, a Mommy Makeover may include the following body plastic surgery procedures: Breast Augmentation, Breast Lift, Breast Reduction, Tummy Tuck (abdominoplasty) and Liposuction.

The objective of a Mommy Makeover is to counteract the physical effects of childbearing and to restore and enhance a woman's figure. Each candidate is different and may require a combination of the procedures listed above or a variation of the procedures. For instance, a full abdominoplasty involves the tightening of the muscle layer as well as excess skin and fat removal while a mini-abdominoplasty is less extensive. Some women may choose a breast augmentation with a breast lift to correct severely deflated breasts, while others may prefer a breast reduction with a breast lift. Liposuction may be performed to sculpt the back, hips and thighs.

It's important to refrain from implementing any of these surgical procedures until women have completed bearing children (if you plan to have more children, wait), that all the baby weight has been lost through diet and exercise and that breastfeeding is completely finished. After pregnancy, it's critical for women to wait at least four to six months to undergo any surgical procedures as most post-op patients are unable to pick up their infants because it puts undue strain on the stitches. Additionally, the new mother's body should have time to normalize.

Once the decision has been made to undergo a variety of these surgical procedures, patients can expect to be out of work for approximately two weeks. After the initial two weeks they will be able to get back to their usual routine with some restrictions. Full recovery, however, can take anywhere from two to three months. Avoidance of heavy lifting, contact sports and jogging should be implemented for up to the first six weeks.

The results of a Mommy Makeover include the restoration of a pre-birth female figure that can be additionally



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improved with breast enhancement and body-contouring procedures. A smooth, flat abdomen and shapely hips and thighs reminiscent of pre-birth silhouettes are also experienced.

*John Smoot, MD, FACS, is Chief of Plastic Surgery at Scripps Memorial Hospital-La Jolla and Wendell Smoot, MD, FACS, has been voted by his peers as Top Doctor by San Diego Magazine for the past five consecutive years. Their plastic surgery practice was established 21 years ago and both physicians are individually board certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery. Either physician can be reached at [www.smootmd.com](http://www.smootmd.com) or (858) 587-9850.*