



DEAR DOCTOR

## I Miss My Pre-Baby Body

Is a "mommy makeover" right for you?

By | **Lyle Leipziger, MD, plastic surgeon** | **Barbara Brody, writer**



Photo credit: Getty Images

| Dear Doctor,

I'm done having kids and I miss my old body! My stomach pooch won't budge and my breasts are saggy. Is there anything I can do to get my body back?

Sincerely,

"Sick of Looking Eternally Pregnant"

Dear Sick of Looking Eternally Pregnant:

What you're describing is not at all unusual. Many women find that their bodies change after having children. Diet and exercise can help you lose weight, but there are limits to what can be accomplished with lifestyle changes.

During pregnancy, a woman's skin stretches to accommodate her growing belly. And her abdominal muscles can stretch, as well, causing the abdominal wall to weaken. Some women develop diastasis recti, where the long muscles that run vertically down the abdomen separate. Unfortunately, none of these are conditions you can fix at the gym. While it's possible to strengthen muscles individually with exercise, even a thousand crunches a day won't bring them back together, or tighten your skin—but a tummy tuck will.

In addition, many women complain about sagging breasts after pregnancy and breastfeeding. Unfortunately, there are no exercises that can enhance breast tissue. If these changes bother you, a breast lift and/or augmentation can fix them. Breast lifts can lift sagging skin and improve breast shape while breast augmentation (implants) can restore fullness and volume. Many women opt for both a lift *and* implants to achieve the desired effect.

Tummy tucks (abdominoplasty), breast lifts, breast augmentation, and liposuction (often to reduce excess fat around the hips) are among the top five most common plastic surgery procedures performed in the United States each year. In fact, many women who hope to get their pre-baby bodies back see a plastic surgeon for a so-called "mommy makeover"—one surgery that addresses their problem areas all at once. Your surgeon can help you decide which surgeries are right for you. And that will depend on your specific concerns about your appearance, your health status and your goals.

As with any surgery, you need to prepare yourself (and your family) for the time it will take to recuperate. Recovering from a tummy tuck is similar to healing after a C-section—you'll need to take it easy for the first few weeks and won't be able to lift anything heavy for a while—including young children. It usually takes about four to six weeks before you're back to your usual routine. Recovery from breast surgery is usually a few weeks.

It's important that you're in good health prior to your surgery. And keep in mind that plastic surgery isn't generally covered by health insurance, so be sure to review the costs with your doctor.

My patients are happy with their results and consider these types of surgeries game-changers in their lives. In fact, many have told me that they not only look better than they did before they had children, but that they look better than they ever have in their entire lives.

“Diet and exercise can help you lose weight, but there are limits to what can be accomplished with lifestyle changes.”

Dr. Lyle Leipziger, plastic surgeon

## Next Steps and Useful Resources:

Meet Dr. Lyle Leipziger ([https://www.northwell.edu/find-care/find-a-doctor/plastic-surgery/dr-lyle-seth-leipziger-md-11312003?](https://www.northwell.edu/find-care/find-a-doctor/plastic-surgery/dr-lyle-seth-leipziger-md-11312003?utm_medium=next_steps_link&utm_source=the_well&utm_campaign=the_well&utm_content=thewell)

[utm\\_medium=next\\_steps\\_link&utm\\_source=the\\_well&utm\\_campaign=the\\_well&utm\\_content=thewell](https://www.northwell.edu/find-care/find-a-doctor/plastic-surgery/dr-lyle-seth-leipziger-md-11312003?utm_medium=next_steps_link&utm_source=the_well&utm_campaign=the_well&utm_content=thewell) plastic surgeon.

Experience a day in the life of a plastic surgeon ([https://thewell.northwell.edu/day-life/plastic-surgeon-day-family-man-night?](https://thewell.northwell.edu/day-life/plastic-surgeon-day-family-man-night?utm_medium=next_steps_link&utm_source=the_well&utm_campaign=the_well&utm_content=thewell)


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See what other people have been asking in our Dear Doctor ([https://thewell.northwell.edu/dear-doctor?](https://thewell.northwell.edu/dear-doctor?utm_medium=next_steps_link&utm_source=the_well&utm_campaign=the_well&utm_content=thewell)

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