

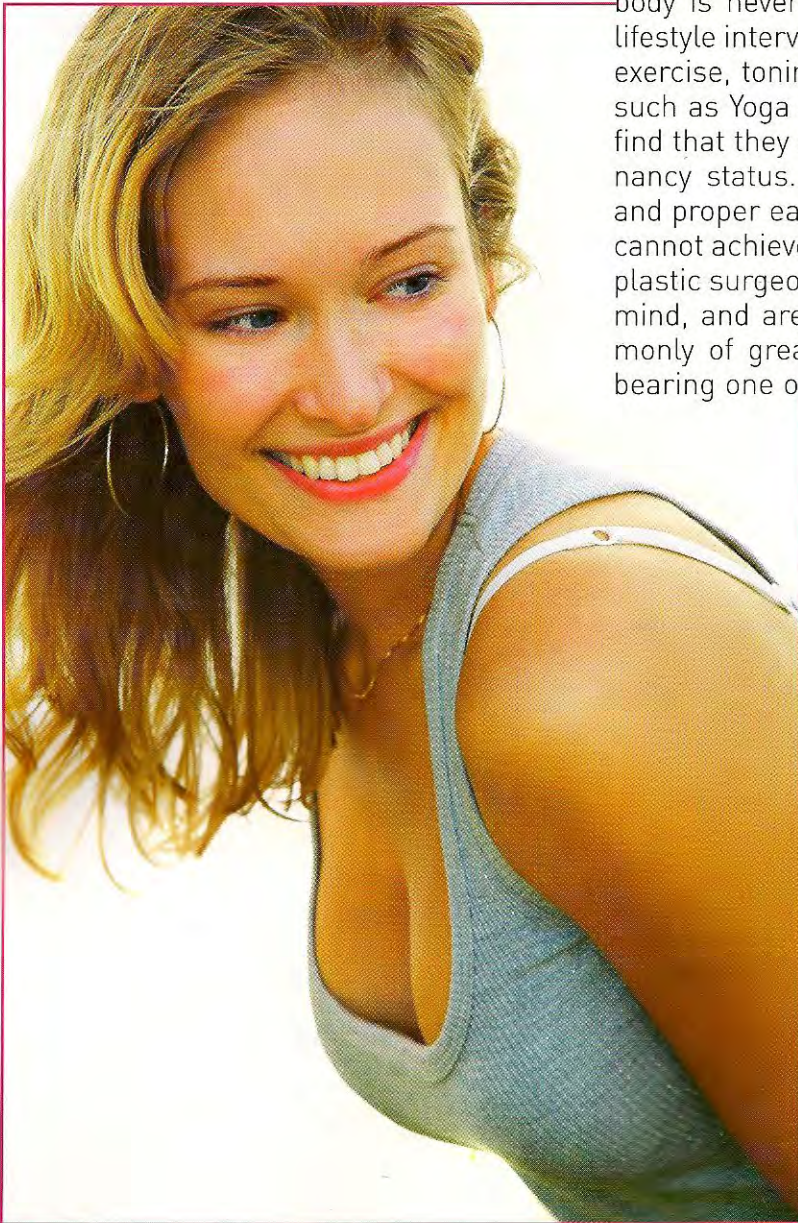
The Mommy Makeover

Plastic Surgery Options After Pregnancy



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The changes a woman's body undergoes as a result of pregnancy are familiar to many women, and most physicians agree that your body is never quite the same. With proper lifestyle interventions such as healthy eating, exercise, toning and strengthening activities such as Yoga and Pilates, many women can find that they can achieve a nearly pre-pregnancy status. But after all that hard work and proper eating, there are some goals you cannot achieve without a little help from your plastic surgeon. Breasts and tummy come to mind, and are indeed the areas most commonly of greatest concern to women after bearing one or more kids.





In December of 2007, the FDA finally concluded that there was no scientific evidence that silicone implants were in any way dangerous to women's health. This decision was arrived at after much deliberation and review of the accumulated evidence from multiple research studies since 1992, when the FDA first placed a voluntary moratorium on the use of silicone gel filled implants. Today, about 95% of women seeking augmentation are choosing silicone over saline. The main advantage of silicone gel filled implants is that they feel more natural. The saline implants can have a bit of a "water bag" feel to them, and there is a greater chance of both seeing and feeling ripples with the saline-filled implants. Both implants have equally good track records as far as maintaining their integrity and not leaking, and may end up lasting a lifetime. Every woman considering breast augmentation needs to know that there is always a possibility that at some point in her lifetime, her implants may need to be replaced, but not necessarily so. The decision to replace implants needs to be made on an individual basis after thorough evaluation by a Board Certified plastic surgeon.

■ BREASTS

The most common change in a woman's breasts after pregnancy is a loss of breast volume, along with some stretching of the breast skin envelope usually resulting in some sagging or drooping known in medical terms as *ptosis*. Sometimes, if there remains an adequate amount of breast tissue, this can be corrected with just a breast lift (*mastopexy*). In other cases, if the breasts were small to begin with, the skin envelope has loosened but there is not enough breast tissue for adequate breast volume and therefore a breast implant will need to be inserted. An implant can be inserted either below the pectoral muscle or above the muscle just underneath the breast tissue, depending on the characteristics of that particular woman's breasts. Today, both saline and silicone implants are available for cosmetic indications (see box above). Sometimes, both a lift and an augmentation may be required, and if so, these can be done simultaneously, or in two separate stages, depending on the recommendation of your plastic surgeon. Recovery from most breast procedures is usually about 7-10 days. Regardless of the kind of surgery that is recommended, all women must always remember to be attentive to proper breast health with annual mammograms from age 40, and physical examination every 6-12 months by their primary care physician (usually OB-GYN) or nurse practitioner. *Continued*

■ ABDOMEN

The tummy is obviously directly affected by pregnancy with significant expansion and stretching. Stretchmarks aren't necessarily seen in all women and this is determined by a woman's skin quality and genetic tendency. Interestingly, it's not necessarily related to the amount of pregnancy weight gain, or even to multiple births. The rectus abdominis (the paired midline abdominal muscles or "six pack") are often splayed apart resulting in a *diastasis* requiring repair. This is usually accompanied by some sort of skin tightening procedure and repositioning of the umbilicus (belly button). The scar can be designed to lie low across the hip to keep with modern fashion styles, or curve upward to hide behind a French cut type of bathing suit or panty. A mini-abdominoplasty is reserved for very mild cases of skin laxity where a shorter scar can be utilized. As plastic surgeons we're not only trying to make the best possible scar (one that is barely noticeable), but we also try to make sure it's hidden beneath your favorite bathing suit. Often, after a C-section, there can be some contour irregularities both above and below the scar and this is easily corrected, either as a stand-alone scar revision, or as part of the tummy tuck (see below, left). Recovery from most abdominoplasties is usually two to three weeks to feel about 85% healed.

BEFORE



32 year old
after two C-sections,
seen prior to,
and one year after
abdominoplasty.

AFTER



BEFORE

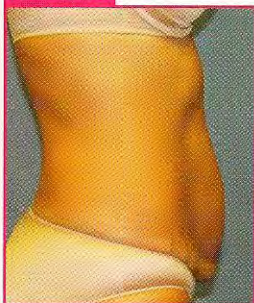


AFTER



Other cosmetic concerns in young moms may gradually present themselves such as early facial sagging or tired looking eyes. Both surgical and non-surgical options exist for addressing some of these concerns. Look for more information about these issues and other good tips about healthy living and looking your best in the next issue of *BeautyToday*. **BT**

BEFORE



AFTER



AFTER



43 year old mother of four,
seen prior to,
and one year after
abdominoplasty.
Notice the scar is hidden
nicely within the panty line.

Ram Kalus, MD is a Board Certified Plastic Surgeon in Columbia, South Carolina and founder of Plastic Surgery of the Carolinas. He is a member of the prestigious American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, and is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Contact Dr. Kalus at 803.733.5881 or www.plasticsurgerycarolinas.com.

Plastic Surgery of the Carolinas

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