ABDOMINOPLASTY
SUR716.002
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COVERAGE:

Abdominoplasty (which may include performance of panniculectomy) is considered reconstructive and medically necessary when clinical documentation supports the following criteria:

1. Panniculus hangs to or below the level of the pubis; AND

2. The panniculus causes chronic intertrigo that consistently reoccurs or remains refractory to appropriate medical therapy that includes systemic antibiotics, topical anti-infectives, anti-inflammatory medication and appropriate skin hygiene.

Repair of diastasis recti (separation of the rectus muscles of the abdominal wall) is considered not medically necessary, except in the presence of a true midline hernia (ventral or umbilical).

DESCRIPTION:

Abdominoplasty, or more commonly referred to as a "tummy tuck", is a procedure to remove excess skin and fat from the middle and lower abdomen in order to tighten the muscles of the abdominal wall. The definition of a Panniculus is a fatty layer of subcutaneous tissue. The development of a panniculus can occur from a large amount of weight loss. A surgical procedure known as a panniculectomy can be done to remove the excess fatty layer of tissue. Intertrigo is an irritant dermatitis in the folds or opposed surfaces of the skin. It is caused by skin friction, sweat retention, moisture, warmth, and concomitant overgrowth of resident microorganisms. It most often occurs in morbidly obese adults.

A complete abdominoplasty will usually take between two to five hours, depending on the extent of work required. The surgery involves making a long incision from one hipbone to the other above the pubic area. A second incision is made to free the navel from surrounding tissue. Next, the skin is separated from the abdominal wall to reveal the vertical muscles that will be tightened. This provides a firmer abdominal wall and helps to narrow the waistline. The skin flap is stretched down and the extra skin is removed. A new hole is usually cut for the navel and then stitched into place. Finally, the incisions are stitched, dressings are applied and any excess fluids are drained from the surgical site.

A partial abdominoplasty may take as little as an hour or two. A much shorter incision is made and the removal of the navel is usually not required. The skin is then separated only between the incision line...
and the navel. This skin flap is stretched down while any excess skin is removed. Finally, the flap is then stitched back into place.

RATIONALE:

Abdominoplasty and repair of the Diastasis Recti are most often utilized to contour and alter the appearance of the abdominal area and are commonly performed as cosmetic surgery.

The procedure is considered medically necessary when a patient meets the outlined criteria as stated under the coverage statement.

PRICING:

None

REFERENCES:


DISCLAIMER:

State and federal law, as well as contract language, including definitions and specific inclusions/exclusions, takes precedence over Medical Policy and must be considered first in determining coverage. The member’s contract benefits in effect on the date that services are rendered must be used. Any benefits are subject to the payment of premiums for the date on which services are rendered. Medical technology is constantly evolving, and we reserve the right to review and update Medical Policy periodically.

HMO Blue Texas physicians who are contracted/affiliated with a
capitated IPA/medical group must contact the IPA/medical group for information regarding HMO claims/reimbursement information and other general polices and procedures.