ADVANCED DERMATOLOGY CARE

LIPOSUCTION INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION:

Past procedures for body contouring by fat removal have involved extensive operations, long hospitalizations, and long scars. These "cosmetic" procedures left much to be desired, even in the hands of a gifted surgeon. In addition to the unsightly scars, postoperative complications were frequent. People with only moderate deposits of fat usually were not willing to trade their fat deposits for the risks and scars.

Liposuction is an improved technique for body contouring which offers good cosmetic results, significantly fewer risks for the patient, minimal scars, and infrequent postoperative complications. This "new" procedure is performed in our office utilizing local anesthesia.

HISTORY:

Several years ago, European physicians (primarily in France) developed a technique for body fat removal through small incisions that are barely noticeable when carefully placed. This technique was developed and presented by the French general surgeon, Yves-Gerard Illouz, M.D. It is truly revolutionary - not only for its concept, but for its remarkable results and few side effects compared to the procedures done previously. The procedure has captured the imagination of physicians and surgeons throughout the world. In 1982, it was brought to the U.S. by cosmetic surgeons representing various medical specialties - plastic surgeons, ENT (otorhinolaryngologists), general surgeons, gynecologists, and dermatologists. Liposuction is a "natural" for dermatologists whose special skills are used for this procedure. "Dermatologic surgeons in particular have played a major role in developing and expanding liposuction techniques" states Dr. Julius Newman, Founder and President of the American Society of Liposuction Surgery.

CONCEPT:

Fat distribution is determined by hereditary and dietary factors. Heredity determines the location and number of individual fat cells, which does not change after puberty. Diet can increase or decrease the amount of fat in each cell but will not affect the total number of cells or their distribution. Fat cells arc sucked out utilizing high-pressure vacuum suction through a metal tube with a blunt tip (cannula) that is placed under the skin through tiny incisions. The technique is ideally suited for the removal of fat deposits in the abdomen, buttocks, chest, hips and thighs. These same techniques can also be used on the facial areas, including the cheeks, jowls, and neck. This technique is NOT for the generally obese patient, and it is not a substitute for weight loss. A limited amount of fat can be removed. One to three pounds usually are extracted, depending on the areas treated. Occasionally, however, more fat is removed.

IDEAL CANDIDATE:

The ideal candidate is in good health, only slightly overweight, and younger than forty. Such a patient will obtain better skin draping because of better skin elasticity. Certain areas are genetically predetermined to accumulate fat. These fat deposits arc unresponsive to diets, and they resist any change despite extensive exercise. The hated areas of deposits include the "saddle-bags", the "waddles", the "potbellies", the "love handles", the "saggy" buttocks, and the fatty knees and chests. These areas concern both men and women.

LIPOSUCTION TECHNIOUE

A. Anesthesia: Liposuction is not started until the patient is completely comfortable and all areas are numb. Before the anesthetic is administered, oral medications are given to relieve tension and reduce anxiety. The sedative and the local anesthetic allow you to be comfortable during surgery. This procedure can be done either under local or mild sedation with a pain shot.

B. Procedure: After the anesthetic has taken effect, several ¼-inch incisions are made inconspicuously in natural body folds. A specially designed suction tube, called a cannula, is introduced through these openings. With a to-and-fro action, the cannula forms individual tunnels in the fat lobules, dislodging fat cells that are then removed by a high-pressure vacuum. The smooth tip of the cannula prevents damage to nerves and blood vessels.

C. Closure and Taping: Once the desired amount of fat has been removed, the incisions are closed with (usually) one or two stitches. Most procedures take between one and three hours for completion. Wide elastic tapes are applied to ensure the adherence of the skin to the underlying tissue during the healing process. The firm elastic tape and elastic corset-like garments act like a mold for the desired contour. These garments/tapes help decrease swelling and reduce the incidence of complications such as lumpiness and bleeding. This tape usually remains in place for five to seven days. Typically, the patient feels well enough to go out in public the next day.

POSTOPERATIVE CARE AND EXPECTATIONS:

Recovery from liposuction surgery can be remarkably rapid. Some discomfort is normal, but mild analgesics are usually sufficient to relieve pain.

Bruising is normal but minimized by the special dressings that are kept on for days and sometimes weeks. The dressings are also important for proper adherence of the skin to the underlying tissue. During the first week, the treated areas may swell and appear larger than they did prior to surgery. It may be several weeks before there is a noticeable diminution in contour. Your final improvement may not be apparent until as long as 3 months or more after surgery. After the bandages are removed, gentle massage and movement exercises are begun. These activities gradually become more vigorous. Exact recommendations for each area are made according to the individual patient's needs. Most patients with sedentary jobs are able to return to work within several days.

ADVERSE EFFECTS AND POSSIBLE DANGERS:

As with any surgical procedure, the patient's condition must be followed carefully and all problems must be reported promptly to the physician. Although this procedure is relatively new in this country, it has been performed in France for over a decade. No long-term adverse effects or consequences occur when this procedure is performed properly. Complications of liposuction surgery include, but are not limited to, the following: fluid or blood temporarily may accumulate beneath the skin - this is treated and resolved by compression or draining. Bruising is normal and numbness in the overlying skin may occur. Numbness, however, is usually temporary and typically resolves spontaneously within six months. Swelling can occur and rapidly resolve with some residual firmness that may take 1-3 months to soften. The thigh and hips may show slight hills and valleys, depending on how they looked before the liposuction and on the variations in the healing process. Infection is minimized by the use of antibiotics before and after surgery. Reactions to anesthetics may occur. This process may worsen cellulite dimpling in some patients. However, one must remember that even with the skin irregularities, the desired result is usually achieved by the removal of the offending bulges, which gives a more pleasant contour to the body and, therefore, a better figure. If there are areas where the skin remains loose over an area treated with liposuction (such as the abdomen, neck, thighs, etc.), additional surgery may be required. The excision of this skin would lead to more scars.

Articles have appeared in the lay press publicizing and even sensationalizing disastrous consequences following liposuction. Fat embolization (small particles of fat traveling to the lungs or other parts of the body) has received particularly lurid coverage. These serious complications and/or deaths associated with liposuction have occurred after patients were operated on by unqualified practitioners, or had additional simultaneous surgical procedures performed that were more likely to have caused the complication. While no surgery is totally safe, liposuction compares favorably with any cosmetic procedure.

These problems are mentioned not to scare you, but to give you full disclosure of the possible complications of this procedure.

In summary:

1) Body contouring through suction fat removal is ideally suited for fat deposits in the hips, buttocks, abdomen, thighs, and knees. It is also effective in the chin/jowl areas.

2) The procedure is done in our office under local anesthesia. The pain is minimal and the treated areas are bandaged to prevent fluid accumulation under the skin and to allow proper molding after the procedure.

3) Both men and women can be treated by liposuction. The most common areas of body contouring in men are the abdomen, "love handles' and chest; in women the "saddlebags", abdomen, thighs and buttocks.

4) Postoperative recuperation varies from two to seven days, depending on the areas treated.

5) Smoothness of the contour area depends on the location treated. The abdomen is remarkably smooth with occasional irregularities. Some dimpling and irregularities of the skin surface may occur on the thighs. However, most patients consider these possible side effects insignificant when compared to the desired result of body contouring by the removal of the offending bulges.

6) This technique is not meant for weight reduction or for the correction of generalized obesity. It is not a substitute for weight loss.

7) Because large amounts of fluid are lost in conjunction with the removal of fat, some patients may experience temporary hypotension and dizziness. This may necessitate fluid or blood replacement. Fluid replacement is always accomplished during surgery. On rare occasion, a blood transfusion may be necessary.

CONSIDERING THE OPERATION???

1) How far are you from your ideal weight for your height and age?

2) What are your expectations? Your desired results and goals should be for improvement, not for perfection.

3) How will it affect your work schedule? This depends on the area involved and on-job demands. Some people are sore and tired for two weeks, but most can return to work in a few days.

4) What is your motivation and emotional stability? Although your physical contours can be shaped, it cannot reshape your life; it may bolster your self-confidence, but the rest is up to you.

5) Can I afford the procedure? Cosmetic surgery is not covered by most insurance policies. Plan ahead, budget, save: borrowing for a cosmetic surgical procedure is not wise. Sometimes, however, that is the only way for some patients to accomplish what they desire.

6) Am I a good candidate? Being young, in good health, and close to ideal weight, with elastic skin are all factors to be considered.

7) Am I willing to diet to keep off the weight that I have lost? Body contouring actually is a positive reinforcement to your new self-image.

8) Do I have any special medical problems that should be considered? Never shield information, medications, or previous illnesses from your doctor. Don't put yourself or your future good health in jeopardy.

Should you not understand any of this information, or should you want further information, please ask. Occasionally, questions will arise after you have left the office. Feel free to call us at 651-484-2724 for additional information. If necessary, another visit can be scheduled. Find out all you need to know. We want all patients to be fully informed.

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