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LIPOSUCTION/LIPOSCULPTURE

LIPOSUCTION: REMOVAL OF UNWANTED BULGES BY ASPIRATING EXCESSIVE FAT WITH THIN CANNULAE VIA SMALL SKIN PUNCTURE WOUNDS TO CONTOUR AND IMPROVE BODY SHAPE

Body contouring by liposuction techniques has become one of the most popular cosmetic procedures worldwide and in this practice as well. The operation involves aspirating fat through minimal skin puncture incisions in order to reduce and contour unwanted bulges and restore balanced proportions to one's figure. This leaves minimal scarring, is predictable and safe to do. Modern liposuction involves injecting tumescent fluid beforehand followed by multiple layer liposuction using thin cannulae to remove the fat, which gives better and more dramatic results with minimal irregularities and complications afterwards. The aspirated fat can be used as fat grafts to fill other areas like the buttocks, cheeks and lips.

A wide range of laser, ultrasound, thermal and radiofrequency assisted lipo techniques are aggressively advertised in the media to help with easy fat removal and skin tightening after lipo, claiming less invasive operations, less downtime and superior results to "conventional" liposuction. These claims still need to be verified by the greater plastic surgery community, especially whether the cost of the technology is justified. In most cases similar results can be obtained at less cost by conventional tumescent liposuction technique.

WHAT OPERATION IS REQUIRED FOR ME?

The extent of liposuction to be done is determined at the preoperative consultation, as the size of fatty deposits and skin elasticity vary widely in different anatomical areas and from patient to patient. The operation is particularly well suited for patients who are at their correct weight but have isolated pockets of unflattering fat deposits. These bulges are often diet resistant and difficult to get rid of by exercise alone. Liposuction can be done at any age and the best results will be obtained if the overlying skin is reasonably elastic and will contract after the fat has been removed.

Commonly treated areas are the abdomen, inner and outer thighs, buttocks, hip/waist rolls, knees and neck. Upper arms, calves, ankles and back folds can also be contoured. Neck and facial liposuction is commonly done in conjunction with facial rejuvenation procedures. In men commonly treated areas are the abdomen, waist/hip rolls, chest fat collections and enlarged breast areas.

Aspirated fat is increasingly used as a natural filling agent for enhancing cheeks, filling hollows under eyes, filling lips and chin. Fat grafting can also be used for buttock contouring, filling smaller breast defects and filling indented scars and defects in various parts of the body.

THE OPERATION

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Depending on the extent of the liposuction and patient requirements, the operations vary from smaller procedures done in the rooms under local anaesthetic to large operations under general anaesthetic in hospital. The exact areas to be treated are marked preoperatively and photos taken for documentation. After the liposuction a support garment is fitted to be worn for 6 weeks. Patients stay in hospital for the operation day only or overnight if more extensive lipo is done.

AFTER THE OPERATION

Liposuction may result in extensive swelling and bruising which can be limited by supportive garments worn for up to 6 weeks afterwards depending on the area and extent of the treatment. Massaging of the treated areas help to reduce swelling and smooth out irregularities. The results are usually immediately evident but usually swelling will take 6 weeks to settle and in some patients as long as 4 months.

Downtime is short and most patients can return to work after 2-3 days in their garments. Physical exercise is discouraged for 4 weeks after the operation.

COMPLICATIONS

Liposuction/sculpture are safe procedures if done by experienced surgeons in a controlled environment. The risk of serious complication is less than for many other cosmetic operations and includes the following: Extensive bruising due to bleeding under the skin, temporary skin numbness, contour irregularities due to dimpling or depressions, wound infection and adverse reaction to anaesthesia. Complications are rare, are usually transient or can be improved by further minor procedures, often in the surgery under local anaesthesia.

Liposuction is one of the more popular and predictable cosmetic surgery operations and patients are usually delighted with their results. It is often combined with other operations like breast reduction and tummy tuck. Results are long lasting as the fat cells are permanently removed during the procedure. Reasonable weight control is advisable to maintain the operation result. This operation is often recommended to others.

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