

# Liposuction

## The Tumescent Technique

Liposuction is now the most commonly performed plastic surgery in the United States. The reason for this has been that many surgeons believe these new techniques of body contouring have made liposuction safer and generally offer better results. One such improvement has been called **TUMESCENT TECHNIQUE**. The tumescent technique refers to the infusion of large amounts of physiological salt solution into the fatty tissue to be removed. Local anesthetic solution as well as adrenaline is also usually used which tends to diminish postoperative pain and generally minimizes blood loss during the procedure. When the tissues are full of fluid the fatty tissue is loosened from its surrounding attachments and is more easily removed by suction. This usually allows larger amounts of fat to be extracted with less bleeding. In certain patients, 8 to 10 times as much fat can now be more safely removed than was previously possible using "dry" liposuction alone.

## Ultrasonic Liposuction

A once popular method used in body contouring was **ULTRASONIC LIPOSUCTION**. Developed in Italy in the late 1980's, ultrasonic liposuction uses high frequency sound waves to liquefy or "melt" the fat prior to removal. Ultrasonic energy has been used in other types of eye surgery and abdominal surgery for removal of other kinds of tissue. However, by "tuning" the frequency of the ultrasonic probe, fatty tissue is dissolved before the energy affects other tissues and structures. Therefore, it appears to be a more specific way of "melting" fat prior to its removal.

It was thought that a major advantage to ultrasonic liposuction was the ability to treat the fat directly underneath the skin, leading to better skin shrinkage. Many surgeons felt this technique was

best indicated for patients who tend to have loose skin. Ultrasonic techniques were also used for corrective surgery in patients who have had previous liposuction and who have persistent areas of irregularity.

Potential complications of ultrasonic liposuction are similar to other liposuction techniques but also include the potential for burns because the end of the probe becomes warm. However, this complication is rare when prolonged contact in any one area is avoided ... and with the use of the tumescent technique as described above. The ultrasonic technique does not appear to offer any advantages in terms of less bleeding, less numbness, or faster recovery.

Ultrasonic liposuction was thought to yield better results in areas such as the upper inner thigh or the back. It was tried in removing excess breast tissue in men (gynecomastia).

Traditional liposuction techniques have stood the test of time.

Almost all liposuction procedures are performed safely and comfortably under general anesthesia as an outpatient. In order to properly contour a specific area, requires some fat removal of nearby areas so that the overall contour is smooth and aesthetically pleasing. This would require large quantities of a local anesthetic which we find to be poorly accepted by both patient and surgeon. Some regions of the body lend themselves, however, to be treated using local anesthesia. The cost of outpatient general anesthesia is not high and taken into consideration when discussing surgical fees.

Some discomfort can be expected from any surgical procedure and liposuction is no exception. Most people find the discomfort transient and usually return to work within 3 to 5 days and normal activity within 3 weeks. We provide our patients with a "compression" garment which is similar to a girdle. This garment



These views show the result of liposuction of the lateral thighs, abdomen, waist and flanks.



These views show the results of liposuction of the hips and outer thighs. Contour markings on the skin are shown in the preoperative view.

helps your body to smoothly re-drape the extra skin as well as help prevent accumulation of serum or blood under the skin. This garment is worn for as long as three weeks and is easily hidden under usual work attire.

Complications referable to liposuction include bruising, localized collection of serum or blood (largely prevented by the compression garment), "waviness" of the skin, transient skin numbness and poor contouring of the body area suctioned. These problems can usually be prevented by proper patient selection,

proper anesthetic techniques and well qualified, experienced surgeons. Liposuction has proven to be both safe and effective for body contouring.

And finally, one often asked question: "Will the fat return if I gain weight?" Our bodies only make a certain number of fat cells; therefore, if we remove some of these cells they cannot return. This is not to say one cannot get fat. A thirty pound weight gain will result in generalized obesity but the predisposition for weight gain in the suctioned areas will be less than before surgery.

***"The aesthetic ideal in the 21st century is to have and keep a slim, athletic figure."***

***For best results, surgical removal of fat should be only one component of an overall weight management and fitness program prescribed by a trained professional.***