

Liposuction

Liposuction is a surgical procedure to remove unwanted body fat to help reduce the size of, and contour, certain areas of the body. Liposuction is usually carried out on the thigh, ankle, knee, abdomen, buttock, hip and chin areas, depending on individual requirements.

Candidates

Not everyone is a good candidate for liposuction. It is not a good alternative to dieting or exercising. To be a good candidate, one must usually be over 18 and in good general health, have tried a diet and exercise regime, and have found that the last 10 or 15 pounds persist in certain pockets on the body. Diabetes, any infection, heart or circulation problems, generally nullify one's eligibility for the procedure.[citation needed] In older people, the skin is usually less elastic, limiting the ability of the skin to readily tighten around the new shape. In this case, other procedures can be added to the liposuction, such as an abdominoplasty (tummy tuck).

Procedure

Liposuction can be performed under a local or general anesthetic, and take up to two hours depending on the area covered. There are various liposuction procedures:

- ✓ **Wet liposuction** - A mixture of fluids – salty solution, local anesthetic and adrenaline – is injected into the area before fat is removed. This helps to reduce swelling and any excessive bleeding, and makes it easier to remove the fatty tissue. An incision (there may be more than one for a larger area) is then made and a tube inserted which is moved around to break up the fat before 'sucking' it out by vacuum. The incision is then closed with sutures.
- ✓ **Dry liposuction** - Similar to wet liposuction, dry liposuction follows the same steps but doesn't involve an injection prior to suction. This is not commonly used and surgeons tend to favor wet liposuction out of the two.
- ✓ **Ultrasound liposuction** - Ultrasound liposuction uses ultrasound waves to break up firmer or more stubborn areas of fat before removal.

Recovery period

You will be susceptible to bruising and swelling following your liposuction procedure, which will begin to subside after a few days; you will need to wear a supportive bandage for a few weeks to help with this. If you are in pain you can take painkillers to help alleviate any discomfort. Dissolvable sutures will disappear after 7-10 days. Strenuous exercise should be avoided for a few weeks and it is recommended that you take up to two weeks off work. The 'new', completed appearance may take several months to become fully visible.

Risks

Liposuction is a very common procedure but as with any cosmetic surgery, it is advised to be aware of any risks. Infection, blood clotting, bleeding under the skin, unsightly scars, numbness, nerve damage, fluid build-up and loose skin are possible risks. Ultrasound liposuction may result in discoloration of the skin and wet liposuction may produce fluid build-up in the lungs (a pulmonary edema) that can trigger breathing problems.