

Liposuction

Liposuction involves removing fat cells from beneath the skin. This is accomplished with suction and the use of small, thin cannulas placed through access sites in the skin. This permanently removes the fat cells in the areas suctioned. The procedure can be done in this office under local or with use of the *tumescent technique* that involves injecting generous volumes of fluid with local anesthetic and epinephrine in it to provide anesthesia and diminish blood loss. General anesthetics or intravenous sedation can also be used but will require the use of a surgery center/operating room and involve additional costs. If you have a low threshold for pain, are extremely anxious, have some health problems, or you have large areas to suction, your procedure should be done in a surgery center/operating room.

There are many technologies to accomplish liposuction. The traditional suctioning employed by myself is the gold standard. Still, technology has created devices that vibrate, produce ultrasound waves to liquefy fat, inject water to facilitate removal and have reciprocating heads to 'bite' the fat out. I have tried VASER and ultrasonic liposuction without any appreciable effect on outcome or patient comfort and subsequently do not use them as it only adds to the cost of providing the service. I believe but cannot prove that ultrasonic liposuction increases your risk for a fat emboli and even death. CoolSculpting and Kybella injection are non-invasive ways to improve contours but liposuction is simply more effective and predictable.

Your post-op course will involve wearing a compression garment for several weeks, often until all bruising is resolved. You will be allowed to shower a few days after and can resume most activities that you can tolerate as long as you are wearing your garment. Most people can have the procedure done on Friday and return to work on Monday. You will experience some discomfort and numbness in the areas suctioned but these sensations should resolve with time. There is a gradual tightening of the skin over the ensuing months.

Liposuction does permanently remove fat but if you gain weight in the future, excess calories will likely be deposited in untreated areas before regaining weight in treated areas. This will result in a funny looking shape.

Liposuction can be combined with other procedures but risks for complications and even death do increase when combined. The overall risk is still rather small but it does increase with added procedures.

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