

# **Informed Consent - Liposuction Surgery (suction-assisted lipectomy and ultrasound-assisted lipectomy)**

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

This is an informed-consent document that has been prepared to help inform you about liposuction surgery (suction-assisted lipectomy and ultrasound-assisted lipectomy), its risks, and alternative treatments.

It is important that you read this information carefully and completely. Please sign the consent for surgery as proposed by your plastic surgeon.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Liposuction is a surgical technique to remove unwanted deposits of fat from specific areas of the body, including the face and neck, upper arms, trunk, abdomen, buttocks, hips and thighs, and the knees, calves and ankles. This is not a substitute for weight reduction, but a method for removing localized deposits of fatty tissue that do not respond to diet or exercise. Liposuction may be performed as a primary procedure for body contouring or combined with other surgical techniques such as facelift, abdominoplasty, or thigh lift procedures to tighten loose skin and supporting structures.

The best candidates for liposuction are individuals of relatively normal weight who have excess fat in particular body areas. Having firm, elastic skin will result in a better final contour after liposuction. Skin that has diminished tone due to stretch marks, weight loss, or natural aging will not reshape itself to the new contours and may require additional surgical techniques to remove and tighten excess skin. Body-contour irregularities due to structures other than fat cannot be improved by this technique. Liposuction by itself will not improve areas of dimpled skin known as "cellulite."

Liposuction (**Suction-assisted lipectomy**) surgery is performed by using a hollow metal surgical instrument known as a cannula that is inserted through small skin incision(s) and is passed back and forth through the area of fatty deposit. The cannula is attached to a vacuum source, which provides the suction needed to remove the fatty tissue.

There are a variety of different techniques used by plastic surgeons for liposuction and care following surgery. Liposuction may be performed under local or general anesthesia.

**Tumescent liposuction technique** involves the infiltration of fluid containing dilute local anesthetic and epinephrine into areas of fatty deposits. This technique can reduce discomfort at the time of surgery, blood loss, and post-operative bruising.

Support garments and dressings are worn to control swelling and promote healing. Your surgeon may recommend that you make arrangements to donate a unit of your own blood that would be used if a blood transfusion were necessary after surgery.

## **ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS**

Alternative forms of management consist of not treating the areas of fatty deposits. Diet and exercise regimens may be of benefit in the overall reduction of excess body fat. Direct removal of excess skin and fatty tissue may be necessary in addition to liposuction in some patients. Risks and potential complications are associated with alternative surgical forms of treatment.

## **RISKS OF LIPOSUCTION SURGERY**

Every surgical procedure involves a certain amount of risk and it is important that you understand these risks and the possible complications associated with them. In addition, every procedure has limitations. An individual's choice to undergo a surgical procedure is based on the comparison of the risk to potential benefit. Although the majority of patients do not experience these complications, you should discuss each of them with your plastic surgeon to make sure you completely understand all possible consequences of liposuction.

**Patient Selection-** Individuals with poor skin tone, medical problems, obesity, or unrealistic expectations may not be candidates for liposuction.

**Bleeding-** It is possible, though unusual, to experience a bleeding episode during or after surgery. Should post-operative bleeding occur, it may require an emergency treatment to drain the accumulated blood or blood transfusion. Intra-operative blood transfusions may be required. Hematoma can occur at any time following injury and may contribute to infection or other problems. Heparin medications that are used to prevent blood clots in veins can produce bleeding and decreased blood platelets. Do not take any aspirin or anti-inflammatory medications for 2 weeks before or after surgery, as this may increase the risk of bleeding. Non-prescription "herbs" and dietary supplements can increase the risk of surgical bleeding. If blood transfusions are needed to treat blood loss, there is a risk of blood-related infections such as hepatitis and HIV (AIDS).

**Infection-** Infection is unusual after surgery. Should an infection occur, additional treatment including antibiotics, hospitalization, or additional surgery may be necessary. In extremely rare instances, life-threatening infections, including toxic shock syndrome have been noted after liposuction surgery.

**Scarring-** All surgery leaves scars, some more visible than others. Although good wound healing after a surgical procedure is expected, abnormal scars may occur within the skin and deeper tissues. Scars may be unattractive and of different color than surrounding skin. Scar appearance may also vary within the same scar, exhibit contour variations and "bunching" due to the amount of excess skin. Scars may be asymmetrical (appear different between right and left side of the body). There is the possibility of visible marks in the skin from sutures. In some cases scars may require surgical revision or treatment.

**Change in Skin Sensation-** It is common to experience diminished (or loss) of skin sensation in areas that have had surgery. This usually resolves over a period of time. Diminished (or complete loss of skin sensation) infrequently occurs and may not totally resolve.

**Skin Discoloration / Swelling-** Bruising and swelling normally occurs following liposuction. The skin in or near the surgical site can appear either lighter or darker than surrounding skin. Although uncommon, swelling and skin discoloration may persist for long periods of time and, in rare situations, may be permanent.

**Skin Contour Irregularities-** Contour and shape irregularities and depressions may occur after liposuction. Visible and palpable wrinkling of skin can occur. Residual skin irregularities at the ends of the incisions or "dog ears" are always a possibility as is skin pleating when there is excessive redundant skin. This may improve with time, or it can be surgically corrected.

**Asymmetry-** Symmetrical body appearance may not result from liposuction surgery. Factors such as skin tone, fatty deposits, skeletal prominence, and muscle tone may contribute to normal asymmetry in body features. Additional surgery may be necessary to attempt to improve asymmetry.

**Seroma-** Fluid accumulations infrequently occur in areas where liposuction has been performed. Additional treatments or surgery to drain accumulations of fluid may be necessary.

**Surgical Anesthesia-** Both local and general anesthesia involve risk. There is the possibility of complications, injury, and even death from all forms of surgical anesthesia or sedation.

**Pain-** You will experience pain after your surgery. Pain of varying intensity and duration may occur and persist after liposuction surgery. Chronic pain may occur very infrequently from nerves becoming trapped in scar tissue.

**Skin Sensitivity-** Itching, tenderness, or exaggerated responses to hot or cold temperatures may occur after surgery. Usually this resolve during healing, but in rare situations it may be chronic.

**Damage to Deeper Structures-** There is the potential for injury to deeper structures including nerves, blood vessels, muscles, and lungs (pneumothorax) during any surgical procedure. The potential for this to occur varies according to the type of procedure being performed. Injury to deeper structures may be temporary or permanent.

**Delayed Healing-** Wound disruption or delayed wound healing is possible. Some areas may not heal normally and may take a long time to heal. Some areas of skin may die. This may require frequent dressing changes or further surgery to remove the non-healed tissue.

**Smokers have a greater risk of skin loss and wound healing complications.**

**Allergic Reactions-** In rare cases, local allergies to tape, suture material and glues, blood products, topical preparations or injected agents have been reported. Serious systemic reactions including shock (anaphylaxis) may occur to drugs used during surgery and prescription medications. Allergic reactions may require additional treatment.

**Fat Necrosis-** Fatty tissue found deep in the skin might die. This may produce areas of firmness within the skin. Additional surgery to remove areas of fat necrosis may be necessary. There is the possibility of contour irregularities in the skin that may result from fat necrosis.

**Pubic Distortion**- It is possible, though unusual, for women to develop distortion of their labia and pubic area. Should this occur, additional treatment including surgery may be necessary.

**Umbilicus**- Malposition, scarring, unacceptable appearance or loss of the umbilicus (navel) may occur.

**Persistent Swelling (Lymphedema)**- Persistent swelling in the legs can occur following liposuction.

**Major Wound Separation**- Wounds may separate after surgery. Should this occur, additional treatment including surgery may be necessary.

**Surgical Shock**- In rare circumstances, liposuction can cause severe trauma, particularly when multiple or extensive areas are suctioned at one time. Although serious complications are infrequent, infections or excessive fluid/blood loss can lead to severe illness and even death. If surgical shock occurs after liposuction, hospitalization and additional treatment would be necessary. Individuals undergoing liposuction procedures where a large volume of fat is removed are at greater risk of complications. Patients contemplating large volume liposuction, greater than 5000 cc's, may be advised to have post-operative monitoring and aftercare that involves overnight hospitalization.

**Deep Venous Thrombosis, Cardiac and Pulmonary Complications**- Surgery, especially longer procedures, may be associated with the formation of, or increase in, blood clots in the venous system. Fat embolism syndrome occurs when fat droplets are trapped in the lungs. This is a very rare and possibly fatal complication of suction-assisted Lipectomy. Pulmonary complications may occur secondarily to both blood clots (pulmonary emboli), fat deposits (fat emboli) or partial collapse of the lungs after general anesthesia. Pulmonary and fat emboli can be life-threatening or fatal in some circumstances. Air travel, inactivity and other conditions may increase the incidence of blood clots traveling to the lungs causing a major blood clot that may result in death. It is important to discuss with your physician any past history of blood clots, swollen legs or the use of estrogen or birth control pills that may contribute to this condition. Cardiac complications are a risk with any surgery and anesthesia, even in patients without symptoms. Should any of these complications occur, you may require hospitalization and additional treatment. If you experience shortness of breath, chest pains, or unusual heart beats, seek medical attention immediately.

**Tumescent Liposuction**-There is the possibility that large volumes of fluid containing dilute local anesthetic drugs and epinephrine that is injected into fatty deposits during surgery may contribute to fluid overload or systemic reaction to these medications. Additional treatment including hospitalization may be necessary.

**Unsatisfactory Result**- Although good results are expected, there is no guarantee or warranty expressed or implied, on the results that may be obtained. You may be disappointed with the results of liposuction surgery. This would include risks such as asymmetry, unsatisfactory or highly visible surgical scar location, unacceptable visible deformities, bunching and rippling in the skin near the suture lines or at the ends of the incisions (dog ears), poor healing, wound

disruption, and loss of sensation. It may not be possible to correct or improve the effects of surgical scars. Additional surgery may be required to attempt to improve results.

## **ADDITIONAL ADVISORIES**

**Metabolic Status of Massive Weight Loss Patients-** Your personal metabolic status of blood chemistry and protein levels may be abnormal following massive weight loss and surgical procedures to make a patient lose weight. Individuals with abnormalities may be a risk for serious medical and surgical complications, including delayed wound healing, infection or even in rare cases, death.

**Long-Term Results-** Subsequent alterations in the appearance of your body may occur as the result of aging, sun exposure, weight loss, weight gain, pregnancy, menopause or other circumstances not related to your surgery.

**Female Patient Information-** It is important to inform your plastic surgeon if you use birth control pills, estrogen replacement, or if you believe you may be pregnant. Many medications including antibiotics may neutralize the preventive effect of birth control pills, allowing for conception and pregnancy.

**Intimate Relations After Surgery-** Surgery involves coagulating of blood vessels and increased activity of any kind may open these vessels leading to a bleed, or hematoma. Activity that increases your heart rate or blood pressure may cause additional bruising, swelling, and the need for return to surgery and control bleeding. It is wise to refrain from sexual activity until your physician states it is safe.

**Body Piercing Procedures-** Individuals who currently wear body-piercing jewelry are advised that an infection could develop from this activity.

**Mental Health Disorders and Elective Surgery-** It is important that all patients seeking to undergo elective surgery have realistic expectations that focus on improvement rather than perfection. Complications or less than satisfactory results are sometimes unavoidable, may require additional surgery and often are stressful. Please openly discuss with your surgeon, prior to surgery, any history that you may have of significant emotional depression or mental health disorders. Although many individuals may benefit psychologically from the results of elective surgery, effects on mental health cannot be accurately predicted.

**Medications-** There are many adverse reactions that occur as the result of taking over-the-counter, herbal, and/or prescription medications. Be sure to check with your physician about any drug interactions that may exist with medications which you are already taking. If you have an adverse reaction, stop the drugs immediately and call your plastic surgeon for further instructions. If the reaction is severe, go immediately to the nearest emergency room. When taking the prescribed pain medications after surgery, realize that they can affect your thought process and coordination. Do not drive, do not operate complex equipment, do not make any important decisions and do not drink any alcohol while taking these medications. Be sure to take your prescribed medication only as directed.

### **ADDITIONAL SURGERY NECESSARY**

There are many variable conditions in addition to risk and potential surgical complications that may influence the long-term result from liposuction. Secondary surgery may be necessary to obtain optimal results. Even though risks and complications occur infrequently, the risks cited are particularly associated with a liposuction surgery. Other complications and risks can occur but are even more uncommon. Should complications occur, additional surgery or other treatments may be necessary. The practice of medicine and surgery is not an exact science. Although good results are expected, there is no guarantee or warranty expressed or implied, on the results that may be obtained.

### **PATIENT COMPLIANCE**

Follow all physician instructions carefully; this is essential for the success of your outcome. It is important that the surgical incisions are not subjected to excessive force, swelling, abrasion, or motion during the time of healing. Personal and vocational activity needs to be restricted. Protective dressings and drains should not be removed unless instructed by your plastic surgeon. Successful post-operative function depends on both surgery and subsequent care. Physical activity that increases your heart rate or blood pressure may cause bruising, swelling, fluid accumulation and the need for return to surgery. It is wise to refrain from intimate physical activities after surgery until your physician states it is safe. It is important that you participate in follow-up care, return for aftercare, and promote your recovery after surgery.

### **HEALTH INSURANCE**

Most health insurance companies exclude coverage for cosmetic surgical operations such as liposuction surgery or any complications that might occur from surgery. Please carefully review your health insurance subscriber-information pamphlet or contact your insurance company for a detailed explanation of their policies. **Most insurance plans exclude coverage for secondary or revisionary surgery.**

### **FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

The cost of surgery involves several charges for the services provided. The total includes fees charged by your surgeon, the cost of surgical supplies, anesthesia, laboratory tests, and possible outpatient hospital charges, depending on where the surgery is performed. Depending

on whether the cost of surgery is covered by an insurance plan, you will be responsible for necessary co-payments, deductibles, and charges not covered. The fees charged for this procedure do not include any potential future costs for additional procedures that you elect to have or require in order to revise, optimize, or complete your outcome. Additional costs may occur should complications develop from the surgery. Secondary surgery or hospital day-surgery charges involved with revision surgery will also be your responsibility. **In signing the consent for this surgery/procedure, you acknowledge that you have been informed about its risk and consequences and accept responsibility for the clinical decisions that were made along with the financial costs of all future treatments.**

### **DISCLAIMER**

Informed-consent documents are used to communicate information about the proposed surgical treatment of a disease or condition along with disclosure of risks and alternative forms of treatment(s), including no surgery. The informed-consent process attempts to define principles of risk disclosure that should generally meet the needs of most patients in most circumstances.

However, informed-consent documents should not be considered all-inclusive in defining other methods of care and risks encountered. Your plastic surgeon may provide you with additional or different information which is based on all the facts in your particular case and the current state of medical knowledge.

Informed-consent documents are not intended to define or serve as the standard of medical care. Standards of medical care are determined on the basis of all of the facts involved in an individual case and are subject to change as scientific knowledge and technology advance and as practice patterns evolve.

**It is important that you read the above information carefully and have all of your questions answered before signing the consent.**