

# **Informed Consent**

**Liposuction Surgery  
(Suction-Assisted Lipectomy Surgery)  
(Ultrasound-Assisted Lipectomy)**

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## **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, as well as alternative treatment(s).

It is important that you read this information carefully and completely. Please initial each page, indicating that you have read the page and sign the consent for surgery as proposed by your plastic surgeon and agreed upon by you.

## **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."

**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.

In some situations, a special cannula may be used that emits ultrasonic energy to break down fatty deposits. This technique is known as **ultrasound-assisted lipectomy**. Depending on your needs, your surgeon may recommend suction-assisted lipectomy alone, or in combination with ultrasound-assisted lipectomy.

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.

## **INHERENT 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 understand all possible consequences of liposuction.

## **SPECIFIC RISKS OF LIPOSUCTION SURGERY**

### **Patient Selection:**

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

**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.

**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.

**Ultrasound-Assisted Lipectomy:**

Risks associated with the use of this technique include the above mentioned risks and the following specific risks:

**Burns:**

Ultrasonic energy may produce burns and tissue damage either at the location where the cannula is inserted into the skin or in other areas if the cannula touches the undersurface of the skin for prolonged periods of time. If burns occur, additional treatment and surgery may be necessary.

**Cannula Fragmentation:**

Ultrasonic energy produced within the cannula may cause disintegration (fragmentation) of the surgical instrument. The occurrence and effect of this is unpredictable. Should this occur, additional treatment including surgery may be necessary.

**Unknown Risks:**

The long-term effect on tissue and organs to exposure to short-duration, high-intensity ultrasonic energy is unknown. There is the possibility that additional risk factors of ultrasound-assisted liposuction may be discovered.

**GENERAL RISKS OF SURGERY**

**Healing Issues:**

Certain medical conditions, dietary supplements and medications may delay and interfere with healing. Patients with massive weight loss may have a healing delay that could result in the incisions coming apart, infection, and tissue changes resulting in the need for additional medical care, surgery, and prolonged hospitalizations. Patients with diabetes or those taking medications such as steroids on an extended basis may have prolonged healing issues. Smoking will cause a delay in the healing process, often resulting in the need for additional surgery. There are general risks associated with healing such as swelling, bleeding, possibility of additional surgery, prolonged recovery, color changes, shape changes, infection, not meeting patient goals and expectations, and added expense to the patient. There may also be a longer recovery due to the length of surgery and anesthesia. Patients with significant skin laxity (patients seeking facelifts, breast lifts, abdominoplasty, and body lifts) will continue to have the same lax skin after surgery. The quality or elasticity of skin will not change and recurrence of skin looseness will occur at some time in the future, quicker for some than others. There are nerve endings that may become involved with healing scars from surgery such as suction-assisted lipectomy, abdominoplasty, facelifts, body lifts, and extremity surgery. While there may not be a major nerve injury, the small nerve endings during the healing period may become too active producing a painful or oversensitive area due to the small sensory nerve involved with scar tissue. Often, massage and early non-surgical intervention resolves this. It is important to discuss post-surgical pain with your surgeon.

**Bleeding:**

It is possible, though unusual, to experience a bleeding episode during or after surgery. Should post-operative bleeding occur, it may require emergency treatment to drain accumulated blood or you may require a blood transfusion, though such occurrences are rare. Increased activity too soon after surgery can lead to increased chance of bleeding and additional surgery. It is important to follow postoperative instructions and limit exercise and strenuous activity for the instructed time. Do not take any aspirin or anti-inflammatory medications for at least ten days 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. Hematoma can occur at any time, usually in the first three weeks following injury to the operative area. If blood transfusions are necessary to treat blood loss, there is the risk of blood-related infections such as hepatitis and HIV (AIDS). Heparin medications that are used to prevent blood clots in veins can produce bleeding and decreased blood platelets.

**Infection:**

Infection is unusual after surgery. Should an infection occur, additional treatment including antibiotics, hospitalization, or additional surgery may be necessary. It is important to tell your surgeon of any other infections, such as ingrown toenail, insect bite, or urinary tract infection. Remote infections, infection in other part of the body, may lead to an infection in the operated area.

**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 the surrounding skin tone. Scar appearance may also vary within the same scar. Scars may be asymmetrical (appear different on the 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.

**Firmness:**

Excessive firmness can occur after surgery due to internal scarring. The occurrence of this is not predictable. Additional treatment including surgery may be necessary.

**Change in Skin Sensation:**

It is common to experience diminished (or loss of) skin sensation in areas that have had surgery. Diminished (or complete loss of) skin sensation may not totally resolve.

**Skin Contour Irregularities:**

Contour and shape irregularities may occur. Visible and palpable wrinkling of skin may occur. Residual skin irregularities at the ends of the incisions or “dog ears” are always a possibility when there is excessive redundant skin. This may improve with time, or it can be surgically corrected.

**Skin Discoloration / Swelling:**

Some bruising and swelling will normally occur. 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 Sensitivity:**

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

**Major Wound Separation:**

Wounds may separate after surgery. Should this occur, additional treatment including surgery may be necessary.

**Sutures:**

Most surgical techniques use deep sutures. You may notice these sutures after your surgery. Sutures may spontaneously poke through the skin, become visible or produce irritation that requires suture removal.

**Delayed Healing:**

Wound disruption or delayed wound healing is possible. Some areas of the skin may not heal normally and may take a long time to heal. Areas of skin may die. This may require frequent dressing changes or further surgery to remove the non-healed tissue. Individuals who have decreased blood supply to tissue from past surgery or radiation therapy may be at increased risk for wound healing and poor surgical outcome. Smokers have a greater risk of skin loss and wound healing complications.

**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.

**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.

**Seroma:**

Infrequently, fluid may accumulate between the skin and the underlying tissues following surgery, trauma or vigorous exercise. Should this problem occur, it may require additional procedures for drainage of fluid.

**Surgical Anesthesia:**

Both local and general anesthesia involves risk. There is the possibility of complications, injury, and even death from all forms of surgical anesthesia or sedation.

**Shock:**

In rare circumstances, your surgical procedure can cause severe trauma, particularly when multiple or extensive procedures are performed. Although serious complications are infrequent, infections or excessive fluid loss can lead to severe illness and even death. If surgical shock occurs, hospitalization and additional treatment would be necessary.

**Pain:**

You will experience pain after your surgery. Pain of varying intensity and duration may occur and persist after surgery. Chronic pain may occur very infrequently from nerves becoming trapped in scar tissue or due to tissue stretching.

**Cardiac and Pulmonary Complications:**

Pulmonary complications may occur secondarily to blood clots (pulmonary emboli), fat deposits (fat emboli) or partial collapse of the lungs after general anesthesia. Pulmonary emboli can be life-threatening or fatal in some circumstances. 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 swelling in your legs or blood clots that may contribute to this condition. Cardiac complications are a risk with any surgery and anesthesia, even in patients without symptoms. If you experience shortness of breath, chest pains, or unusual heart beats, seek medical attention immediately. Should any of these complications occur, you may require hospitalization and additional treatment.

**Venous Thrombosis and Sequelae:**

Thrombosed veins, which resemble cords, occasionally develop in the area of the breast or around IV sites, and usually resolve without medical or surgical treatment. It is important to discuss with your surgeon any birth control pills you are taking. Certain high estrogen pills may increase your risk of thrombosed veins.

**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 in response to drugs used during surgery and prescription medicines. Allergic reactions may require additional treatment.

**Drug Reactions:**

Unexpected drug allergies, lack of proper response to medication, or illness caused by the prescribed drug are possibilities. It is important for you to inform your physician of any problems you have had with any medication or allergies to medication, prescribed or over the counter, as well as medications you now regularly take.

**Asymmetry:**

Symmetrical body appearance may not result after surgery. Factors such as skin tone, fatty deposits, skeletal prominence, and muscle tone may contribute to normal asymmetry in body features. Most patients have differences between the right and left side of their bodies before any surgery is performed. Additional surgery may be necessary to attempt to diminish asymmetry.

**Surgical Wetting Solutions:**

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.

**Persistent Swelling (Lymphedema):**

Persistent swelling can occur following surgery.

**Unsatisfactory Result:**

Although good results are expected, there is no guarantee or warranty expressed or implied, on the results that may be obtained. The body is not asymmetric and almost everyone has some degree of unevenness which may not be recognized in advance. One side of the face may be slightly larger, one side of the face droopier. The breast and trunk area exhibits the same possibilities. Many of such issues cannot be fully corrected with surgery. The more realistic your expectations as to results, the better your results will be in your eye. Some patients never achieve their desired goals or results, at no fault of the surgeon or surgery. You may be disappointed with the results of surgery. Asymmetry, unanticipated shape and size, loss of function, wound disruption, poor healing, and loss of sensation may occur after surgery. Size may be incorrect. Unsatisfactory surgical scar location or appearance may occur. It may be necessary to perform additional surgery to improve your results.

**ADDITIONAL ADVISORIES**

**Smoking, Second-Hand Smoke Exposure, Nicotine Products (Patch, Gum, Nasal Spray):**

Patients who are currently smoking or use tobacco or nicotine products (patch, gum, or nasal spray) are at a greater risk for significant surgical complications of skin dying and delayed healing and additional scarring. Individuals exposed to second-hand smoke are also at potential risk for similar complications attributable to nicotine exposure. Additionally, smoking may have a significant negative effect on anesthesia and recovery from anesthesia, with coughing and possibly increased bleeding. Individuals who are not exposed to tobacco smoke or nicotine-containing products have a significantly lower risk of this type of complication. Please indicate your current status regarding these items below:

\_\_\_ I am a non-smoker and do not use nicotine products. I understand the potential risk of second-hand smoke exposure causing surgical complications.

\_\_\_ I am a smoker or use tobacco / nicotine products. I understand the risk of surgical complications due to smoking or use of nicotine products.

\_\_\_ I have smoked and stopped approximately \_\_\_\_\_ ago. I understand I may still have the effects and therefore risks from smoking in my system, if not enough time has lapsed.

It is important to refrain from smoking at least 6 weeks before surgery and until your physician states it is safe to return, if desired. I acknowledge that I will inform my physician if I continue to smoke within this time frame, and understand that for my safety, the surgery, if possible, may be delayed.

Smoking may have such a negative effect on your surgery that a urine test just before surgery may be done which will prove the presence of Nicotine. If positive, your surgery may be cancelled and your

surgery, scheduling fee, and other prepaid amounts may be forfeited. Honestly disclose smoking to your surgeon.

**Sleep Apnea / CPAP:**

Individuals who have breathing disorders such as “Obstructive Sleep Apnea” and who may rely upon CPAP devices (constant positive airway pressure) or utilize nighttime oxygen are advised that they are at a substantive risk for respiratory arrest and death when they take narcotic pain medications following surgery. This is an important consideration when evaluating the safety of surgical procedures in terms of very serious complications, including death, that relate to pre-existing medical conditions. Surgery may be considered only with monitoring afterwards in a hospital setting in order to reduce risk of potential respiratory complications and to safely manage pain following surgery.

Please consider the following symptoms of sleep apnea:

- I am frequently tired upon waking and throughout the day
- I have trouble staying asleep at night
- I have been told that I snore or stop breathing during sleep
- I wake up throughout the night or constantly turn from side to side
- I have been told that my legs or arms jerk while I’m sleeping
- I make abrupt snorting noises during sleep
- I feel tired or fall asleep during the day

It is important for you to inform and discuss any of the above symptoms that you have experienced with your surgeon.

**Off-Label FDA Issues:**

There are many devices, medications and injectable fillers and botulinum toxins that are approved for specific use by the FDA, but this proposed use is “Off-Label”, that is not specifically approved by the FDA. It is important that you understand this proposed use is not experimental and your physician believes it to be safe and effective. =

I acknowledge that I have been informed about the Off-Label FDA status of \_\_\_\_\_ and I understand it is not experimental and accept its use.

**Medications and Herbal Dietary Supplements:**

There are potential adverse reactions that occur as the result of taking over-the-counter, herbal, and/or prescription medications. Aspirin and medications that contain aspirin interfere with bleeding. These include non-steroidal anti-inflammatories such as Motrin, Advil, and Aleve. It is very important not to stop drugs that interfere with platelets, such as Plavix, which is used after a stent. It is important if you have had a stent and are taking Plavix that you inform the plastic surgeon. Stopping Plavix may result in a heart attack, stroke and even death. 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.

**Sun Exposure – Direct or Tanning Salon:**

The effects of the sun are damaging to the skin. Exposing the treated areas to sun may result in increased scarring, color changes, and poor healing. Patients who tan, either outdoors or in a salon, should inform their surgeon and either delay treatment, or avoid tanning until the surgeon says it is safe to resume. The damaging effect of sun exposure occurs even with the use sun block or clothing coverage.

**Travel Plans:**

Any surgery holds the risk of complications that may delay healing and your return to normal life. Please let the surgeon know of any travel plans, important commitments already scheduled or planned, or time

demands that are important to you, so that appropriate timing of surgery can occur. There are no guarantees that you will be able to resume all activities in the desired time frame.

**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.

**Body-Piercing Procedures:**

Individuals who currently wear body-piercing jewelry in the surgical region are advised that an infection could develop from this activity.

**Female Patient Information:**

It is important to inform your plastic surgeon if you use birth control pills, estrogen replacement, or if you suspect 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 pulse or heart rate may cause additional bruising, swelling, and the need for return to surgery to control bleeding. It is wise to refrain from intimate physical activities until your physician states it is safe.

**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.

**DVT/PE Risks and Advisory:**

There is a risk of blood clots, Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) and Pulmonary Embolus (PE) with every surgical procedure. It varies with the risk factors below. The higher the risk factors, the greater the risk and the more involved you must be in both understanding these risks and, when permitted by your physician, walking and moving your legs. There may also be leg stockings, squeezing active leg devices, and possibly medicines to help lower your risk.

There are many conditions that may increase or affect risks of clotting. Inform your doctor about any past or present history of any of the following:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Past History of Blood Clots
- \_\_\_\_\_ Family History of Blood Clots
- \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Control Pills
- \_\_\_\_\_ Swollen Legs
- \_\_\_\_\_ History of Cancer
- \_\_\_\_\_ Large Dose Vitamins
- \_\_\_\_\_ Varicose Veins
- \_\_\_\_\_ Past Illnesses of the Heart, Liver, Lung, or Gastrointestinal Tract.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand the risks relating to DVT/PE and how important it is to comply with therapy as discussed with my surgeon. The methods of preventative therapy include:

- \_\_\_ Early ambulation when allowed
- \_\_\_ Compression devices (SCD/ICD)
- \_\_\_ ASA protocol when allowed (Aspirin)
- \_\_\_ Heparin protocol when allowed
- \_\_\_ Enoxaparin protocol when allowed

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The risks of DVT/PE may be almost as great as the prophylactic therapy when involving Aspirin, Heparin, and Exoxaparin. Be aware that if your surgery is elective, those patients with very high risks should consider not proceeding with such elective surgery.

**ADDITIONAL SURGERY NECESSARY (Re-Operations)**

There are many variable conditions that may influence the long-term result of surgery. It is unknown how your tissue may respond or how wound healing will occur after surgery. Secondary surgery may be necessary to perform additional tightening or repositioning of body structures. Should complications occur, additional surgery or other treatments may be necessary. Even though risks and complications occur infrequently, the risks cited are particularly associated with this surgery. Other complications and risks can occur but are even more uncommon. 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. In some situations, it may not be possible to achieve optimal results with a single surgical procedure. You and your surgeon will discuss the options available should additional surgery be advised. There may be additional costs and expenses for such additional procedures, including surgical fees, facility and anesthesia fees, pathology and lab testing.

**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 pulse or heart rate 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.

**REVISION POLICY**

Surgical revision surgery is a common part of elective surgery. Your procedure will not stop you from aging, sagging, scarring, or experiencing ongoing skin changes that are more genetically controlled. If revision surgery is either desired or advisable within one year after the initial surgery, there may be a physician's fee. Additionally, there may be fees associated with the hospital, facility, anesthesia, pathology, lab, and any supplies such as implants, etc. Revision policy and courtesy discounts only apply to patients who comply with post-op orders and visits.

**HEALTH INSURANCE**

Most health insurance companies exclude coverage for cosmetic surgical operations or any resulting complications. Please carefully review your health insurance subscriber-information pamphlet. Most insurance plans exclude coverage for secondary or revisionary surgery due to complications of cosmetic surgery. It is unethical and fraudulent to bill insurance for cosmetic procedures. We cannot participate in such activities.

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