

Liposuction is a surgical technique that improves the body's contour by removing excess fat from deposits located between the skin and muscle.

Am I suitable?

Liposuction is not a weight loss procedure, it is a body shaping technique. It is used for the removal of stubborn areas of fat that do not change with exercise or diet. It can be used to remove localized fatty growths called lipomas, and to reduce the male breast, a condition known as Gynaecomastia. A maximum of around 3 to 4 litres of fat can be removed safely with liposuction although often smaller areas are treated under local anaesthetic.

What does the procedure involve?

Exact details will be discussed at consultation and a decision as to local or general anaesthetic will be made. Mostly, liposuction can be performed as a day case but for larger general anaesthetic cases an overnight stay may be required. The area is injected with fluid containing local anaesthetic and adrenaline to make it taught, numb and bleed less – this is called “wet technique” liposuction. Fat is then removed with a metal suction tube. Remember it's not about what is taken out, but what is left behind! Too much removal can leave dips and troughs so more isn't always better – your surgeon will judge when enough has been removed. We would rather go back and remove more, than take too much, as restoring fat is far harder than removing more. A compression garment is worn permanently night and day, except when showering, for between 2 and 6 weeks depending upon the area treated and skin quality.

Does it produce permanent results?

After liposuction, the body's new shape is more or less permanent. If a patient does gain a moderate amount of weight after liposuction, then the figure will simply be a larger version of the new body shape. Fat cells that are removed by liposuction do not grow back. Of course after liposuction, the clock keeps ticking, and advancing age will produce the usual changes in the shape of the body associated with the aging process. Nevertheless, the benefits of liposuction will always be apparent.

How much weight can I lose?

Patients should not expect to lose a dramatic amount of weight with liposuction. Liposuction should produce significant improvements in aesthetic appearance of a patient, as specific areas are targeted.

Will the fat cells grow back?

Liposuction removes fat cells permanently. However the fat cells that remain will still gain some weight in the usual manner if the patient puts on weight. Weight gain tends to be more balanced however, as the majority of the stubborn storage area of fat cells has been removed.

How long will it be until I see results?

Most patients will see 90% of their ultimate liposuction results within three months of surgery. For the first few weeks, there will be postoperative swelling. The rate at which this swelling subsides depends on the surgical technique and method for postoperative care.

Will it help cellulite or sagging skin?

No. Cellulite or sagging skin does not improve to a significant degree after treatment. Liposuction improves the shape of the body, but does not significantly improve the quality of skin texture. We do not advise liposuction if the overlying skin is stretch marked or saggy.

When can I begin normal activities and work?

With small areas having been done, most patients can return to a desk-type job within two days. Some patients are able to return to jogging, golf and light aerobic exercise within a few days. Some patients do find the soreness after surgery more significant than others.

How long before I can fly?

Generally patients can go on short flights within 24 hours although we advise flight stockings, plenty of fluid intake and walking on the aircraft. Long haul flights should not be undertaken until the bruising has subsided (around three weeks).

How long will the bruising and swelling last?

The amount of bruising varies considerably between patients. Generally bruising fades two to three weeks after surgery. We advise Arnica tablets or drops to help reduce bruising and swelling. An electric massager to the area can be useful after the first few weeks to improve lymphatic circulation and recovery. The full result and improvements in body contour may take many months to see.