

LIPOSUCTION—READ ME FIRST

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1. WHAT IS LIPOSUCTION?

Liposuction is one of the most popular plastic surgery techniques practiced today. This type of surgery involves the removal of fat from certain areas of the body such as the abdomen, hips, thighs, and upper arms. It is often done in conjunction with other plastic surgery procedures. The process of liposuction varies according to the patient's preference and what the cosmetic goals are.

1.1. LIPOSUCTION: THE BASICS

You might be familiar with the term 'liposuction'. However, specific knowledge of this procedure is often vague. For those contemplating liposuction, you must educate yourself to ensure that you achieve your cosmetic goal and do it safely.

To perform liposuction, fat cells are surgically removed from specific problem areas in your body. To do this, surgeons use a stainless steel suction tube known as a cannula. Aside from removing excessive fat, surgical liposuction procedures are also done for contouring purposes. This attests to the idea that liposuction is mostly done for cosmetic purposes.

Since liposuction was first performed in 1974, the procedure has experienced major transformation and advancements over recent years. The demand for doctors who perform body contouring liposuction techniques has grown exponentially.

According to data gathered by the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, in the year 1998 alone over 200,000 people have undergone liposuction. More people are considering this type of plastic surgery, especially now that the safety is improved along with advancements in tools and procedures.

1.2. SHOULD YOU UNDERGO LIPOSUCTION?

The choice for undergoing liposuction is mainly yours. However, this is not to say that you should not proceed with caution. Despite the recent technological breakthroughs that ensure the safety and success of this procedure, there is always some risk.

Before proceeding with this surgery, you need to set realistic goals. Dramatic results are indeed possible with liposuction, but it is a process. There are several factors to consider that help determine the success of the procedure such as age, weight, skin elasticity and your overall health condition.

Most doctors do not allow people with a weak immune system, artery or heart problems, diabetes, or other history of health problems to undergo liposuction. This is because of the health risks involved. Consult with a doctor first when you plan on undergoing liposuction and have them assess whether you are a healthy candidate. This is discussed in depth in an upcoming chapter.

1.3. PROCEDURES FOR LIPOSUCTION

In concept, the process of liposuction is quite simple. The doctors vacuum out excess fats from your body. However, this is as complex as any other type of surgery. The actual procedure for liposuction involves three phases: the creation of an incision, surgical removal of fat, and closing off the incision.

First, your doctor administers anesthesia and some other fluids if necessary. Once the anesthesia has taken effect, your doctor starts creating small incisions on specific areas in your body where fat is to be removed; the size of these incisions range from a quarter of an inch to 3 inches.

Once an incision has been made, a vacuum tube (called a cannula) is now inserted through the incision. This tube penetrates through the deep layers of the fat. The cannula moves back and forth in order to break down these fat cells. Once they are broken up, those fats are suctioned out through a syringe. Due to the excessive loss of blood through the procedure, patients are often given replacement fluids following the procedure.

Once the removal of fat is finished, the incisions are sutured closed.

2. WHAT LIPOSUCTION CAN DO AND WHAT IT CANNOT DO

Due to the popularity of the procedure, patients are opting for liposuction as a cosmetic procedure without realizing what it can actually do to their body. Hence, many end up regretting their decision to undergo liposuction because it failed to achieve the results they wanted. Therefore, it is important for everyone to understand exactly what their cosmetic goals are and educate themselves as to whether liposuction is the right procedure for them.

2.1. LIPOSUCTION CAN ACHIEVE BODY SYMMETRY

To those wanting to achieve a well-shaped body, they often do a lot of exercise and embark on a healthy diet. Yet many are disappointed to find that despite these efforts, there is still stubborn fat that won't go away. On the other hand, most doctors discourage starving yourself just to achieve that shape you've always dreamed of.

In this modern age, surgical procedures can intervene and help you achieve that desired body shape. There is a branch of liposuction called liposculpture that enables you to sculpt your body into that desired shape and contour. This is done by removing excess fat in certain areas. The key for this procedure is removing small fats in certain parts of the body to accentuate the shape.

You need to remember that liposuction is not intended for weight control and a large reduction of fat. You cannot expect to reduce your size. In other words, an overweight person will not become skinny.

2.2. LIPOSUCTION CANNOT STOP WEIGHT GAIN

Although liposuction has been proven effective in terms of removing fat in particular areas in the body, doctors remind us that the results are not permanent. Over a certain period of time, these fats will return depending mainly on metabolism. Therefore, most doctors advise their patients to follow up any liposuction procedure with a healthy diet to discourage the re-formation of fat.

Studies have shown that the localized effects brought about by liposuction are evident only within 6 to 12 months. Therefore, every patient is advised to observe a healthy diet if they want to maintain the results. If you want to achieve a preferable body figure, then it is your responsibility to take care of your body whether you undergo liposuction or not.

You should not use liposuction as a diet replacement. It does not resolve your weight problems but only adjusts disproportionate areas in your body.

2.3. LIPOSUCTION WON'T REMOVE CELLULITE

If you are undergoing ordinary liposuction procedures, then this won't be able to erase that unpleasant cellulite. Cellulite is a case of dimpling on the surface of your skin due to ripples of fat and its underlying fibrous connective tissues.

Furthermore, doctors say that when liposuction is done on the lower layers of your skin, this could even worsen cellulite since it is mostly evident in the upper layers of your skin. Therefore, if you want to enhance the results of liposuction, you need to couple them with other physical factors like good quality sleep, exercise, and maintaining a normal blood pressure.

2.4. LIPOSUCTION WON'T FIRM UP YOUR SKIN

Liposuction is a procedure done only to reduce fat in your body. Therefore, if you want to tighten up your skin tissues, then liposuction is definitely not the procedure for you. You can consult your doctor for the proper procedure to achieve this effect, but do not expect it to happen with liposuction.

Moreover, for men looking to achieve six-pack abs, liposuction won't chisel that for you. It only aims to sculpt your body. On the other hand, muscles are responsible for achieving a six-pack abs and only exercise will do that for you.

2.5. LIPOSUCTION SHOULD ONLY ENHANCE

For all patients of liposuction, you cannot expect to maintain results from the procedure unless you take responsibility for your body. Take time to modify a previously unhealthy diet and engage in a regular exercise routine for best results. Liposuction serves only to enhance the shape or figure of your body.

In fact, most of those people who have undergone liposuction and refused to make necessary health changes ended up accumulating fat in their body again. Moreover, there are some that even decide to undergo the procedure for a second time and are still unable to maintain the results.

Therefore, you need to make realistic expectations from the liposuction procedure and work on achieving that.

3. WHO IS A GOOD CANDIDATE?

As much as you'd like to undergo liposuction, not everyone is qualified for the procedure. There are certain health risks involved that need to be considered to avoid complications. Therefore, it is advised that you consult with your doctor first. You should discuss any existing health conditions that might prevent you from becoming a likely candidate for liposuction.

3.1. ABOUT LIPOSUCTION CANDIDATES

To be a good candidate for liposuction, you need to meet certain requirements, most of which pertain to your health condition. Just like any other type of surgery, liposuction could also pose a risk to your health and you need to address them.

First, you need to have realistic expectations when it comes to results from the procedure. There are several existing plastic surgery procedures available and each one of them caters to your specific aesthetic and functional needs. Therefore, you cannot expect a single procedure, such as liposuction, to do it all for you.

Furthermore, you need to back up liposuction with proper diet and exercise. If not, you will find those returning following the procedure. You cannot expect to undergo this procedure and be fat-proof after that.

3.2. POSSIBLE CANDIDATES FOR LIPOSUCTION

Since liposuction aims to remove accumulated fats under your skin, the best candidates for this procedure are those with flabby areas in their body such as neck, thighs, arms, and abdomen. You might notice that there are certain stubborn areas in your body that retain fat deposits despite a healthy diet and regular exercise. This could be due to several factors such as body chemistry or genetic make-up. Liposuction could be an effective means to get rid of those stubborn fats once and for all.

Aside from this obvious consideration, liposuction is best for physically fit or healthy individuals, preferably those who exercise regularly and are not more than 20 pounds over the normal weight for their age.

Moreover, you can get optimum results from liposuction if you have localized fat deposits. However, you cannot expect dramatic changes in the appearance of your body as soon as you undergo this procedure. Doctors, on the other hand, do not advise crash dieting to speed up the results.

3.3. LIMITATIONS TO YOUR CANDIDACY FOR LIPOSUCTION

If you want to lose weight and are looking at liposuction as an option for this, you will not achieve the result you want. Overweight individuals and those with extremely large areas where fat has deposited are not recommended for this type of procedure. However, you are not entirely exempted from undergoing liposuction. If you really want to pursue liposuction, you must first lose some weight or reduce those fatty areas through diet or exercise.

For extremely overweight individuals wherein diet and exercise will not help, doctors recommend you undergo gastric bypass instead of liposuction. Meanwhile, if you happen to lose weight and need to tighten up your muscles, then abdominoplasty might be the procedure to go for.

It is important to undergo honest assessment with your doctor in terms of your body and condition of your health. This is the only correct method to determine what procedure you really need.

Age is another major limitation for undergoing liposuction. As people age, the skin eventually loses its elasticity. Older patients might notice that despite liposuction procedures, their skin is not as tight when compared to younger patients.

Moreover, patients beyond the age of 40 have less skin contraction and the procedure will most likely result to an looser skin. In fact, some doctors will not even proceed with the procedure if a patient has skin lacking elasticity.

3.4. BEST FOR LIPOSUCTION

Here is a rundown of qualities that make you a likely candidate for liposuction:

- Overall good health condition

- Within 25 pounds of ideal weight
- Have fatty problem areas
- Have not had previous surgery in the same area to be treated
- With elastic and firm skin
- Do not have fluctuating weight
- Aim towards reshaping or sculpting the body
- Non-smoker
- Psychologically stable
- Have substantial knowledge of the procedure

Meanwhile, if you have the following qualities, then you should think twice, or consult your doctor before proceeding with liposuction:

- If you have clotting disorders
- Obese
- Suffering from physical and emotional trauma
- Have hernias untreated within the same area to be treated
- Have inelastic skin

4. FINDING A TOP NOTCH DOCTOR

4.1. HOW TO FIND A TOP NOTCH DOCTOR

The success of your liposuction procedure is often determined by the skill and expertise of the doctor who performs the procedure. That is why it was the topic of debate during the earlier stages of liposuction development.

Now that more doctors have studied and developed the skill needed to perform this procedure, you must not be complacent. Devote time in selecting the right doctor for the job. After all, not only is the success of the procedure on the line, but your health and life as well.

Choosing your doctor entails as much work as choosing the right procedure to be done to treat your specific problems. Here are a few areas you must look into to help in your search.

4.2. HISTORY OF THE DOCTOR

The search for a reliable plastic surgeon must not be taken lightly. Aside from your image, your health is also at risk. Whether you have a list from which you are choosing or are still in the process of looking for a surgeon, it is best to opt for someone who has been in the field of plastic surgery for a considerable amount of time.

Take note of how many surgeries they have performed over the span of their career and the success ratio for the procedure. The more experience they have in this field, the more confident you will become about achieving your desired outcome.

Aside from what you have gathered in the research, you need to ask as many questions of the doctor as possible. Look into the details of various cases of liposuction surgery he or she has done in the past. This should give you a better idea of what their specific fields of expertise are.

4.3. CREDENTIALS

The American Board of Plastic Surgery contains a list of certified doctors in the country. They are your best source for finding out whether a particular doctor has the skills and expertise needed to perform plastic surgical operations such as liposuction.

If the doctor you are considering appears on the said board's list, then you can proceed with this doctor. As long as your doctor has been certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery, it only means that they have graduated from a reputed medical school, accomplished 5 years of residency. However, this is not to dismiss doctors that are not board certified, since there are a few skilled ones who are not. But with the board's certification, you can be assured that your doctor is among the best there is.

4.4. DETERMINE YOUR PROBLEM AREA

Although most general plastic surgeons are able to perform, most of them are experts in certain regions. Therefore, you need to consider the specific area of the body you want to treat when choosing your doctor.

Ask a particular doctor in which areas of the body they have the highest level of expertise or specialization. Aside from that, take note of other important details such as how many times they have performed that specific liposuction procedure on past patients. This should really help narrow down your choices.

4.5. DOCTOR'S REPUTATION

Just like any other field, reputation is vital in choosing a particular doctor. If a certain surgeon has been successful in delivering high quality results, they usually have a good reputation based on testimonials from their satisfied patients.

Other additional factors to consider are where the doctor will perform the actual surgery. Is it in a local hospital facility or in the doctor's own office? It is important that even though your doctor performs the surgery from his office, he must be affiliated with the local hospital so you can have access to their larger facilities, in case something goes wrong during the operation.

4.6. COMFORT LEVEL BETWEEN DOCTOR AND PATIENT

Feeling comfortable with your doctor is one of the most essential factors you need to consider. This is important because you will have to work together in order to achieve your desired results. The level of interaction is constant, from the pre-surgical procedure, to the actual surgery, and post-surgical follow ups. Therefore, you must have a doctor that is as committed to the surgery as you are.

A practical tip you need to consider is choosing a doctor whose office is not too distant from where you live.

5. YOUR FIRST DOCTOR VISIT

5.1. YOUR FIRST DOCTOR VISIT - WHAT TO EXPECT

It is generally recommended that you visit a doctor when you are thinking of having a liposuction. Although you can use the internet as a source of database for whatever you might need to know about liposuction as a procedure, there are certain limitations to the information you can access.

Therefore, it is important that you have your doctor closely monitor your pre-surgical condition and note improvements following the procedure.

5.2. WHY IS LIPOSUCTION CONSULTATION IMPORTANT?

The internet is teeming with information. You might think that it would be more practical and less costly to look for resources over the internet where certified doctors share real information. However, seeing a real doctor cannot be replaced by whatever information you can find on the web.

A clear difference is that all the information you can find over the web is too general. After all, the doctor cannot physically examine you and assess your health condition. Consulting with a doctor as a pre-liposuction procedure serves several other purposes.

First, the doctor will be able to educate you on the possible risks and complications involved so you can weigh in on whether it is worth the risk. Second, the doctor will be able to suggest more suitable procedures that will address your specific body issues. Third, you will be informed on what you need to do (and not to do) if you want to achieve optimum results.

5.3. PRE-CONSULTATION ESSENTIALS

Before starting your plastic surgery consultation, you have lots of work to do. The first, and most essential, is finding a reliable plastic surgeon to perform the job. Before settling on one, you must have considered all options and looked into qualifications you are looking for in your choice of doctors.

Although it is best recommended to opt for a doctor near your area, this must not restrict you. You should not settle for what you deem is an unqualified doctor just because they are within your area. If you can, look for more qualified doctors outside your area.

Reading the previous chapter arms you with everything you need to consider when selecting a doctor.

After you have considered all that, do as much research as possible on the actual liposuction procedure you are contemplating. You can become too consumed with choosing the doctor that you end up neglecting an equally important part of the equation, which is the specific liposuction technique you require.

What to Bring During the Consultation

If you have any other existing medical conditions, it is important to bring a list of medications you are currently taking. This will enable your doctor to have an accurate assessment of your health condition, as well as possible reactions. If you have specific inquiries regarding certain medications, try to jot them down as well so you can ask your doctor about them.

If you can, bring some photos of yourself and specific problem areas to enable your doctor to better visualize what you want to achieve from the procedure. As much as you stress what you want to achieve out of the procedure, you also need to equally explain what you want to avoid.

If you can, bring a friend, family member, or spouse to support and help you through every step of the procedure.

5.4. LIST OF POSSIBLE QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

With any type of consultation, it is important that you ask your doctor a series of questions, especially those related to what you wish to achieve. Here are a few basic ones:

- What type of anesthesia is used for my procedure? Why?
- How long does healing take? When will I begin to look 'normal' again?
- What type of pain medications will be prescribed to me?
- What alternative procedures are available?
- How long before I can resume my normal activities?
- What tips can you give to help me cope with pain or discomfort?
- What are the policies in terms of post-operative care and follow ups?

6. MAKING THE DECISION

6.1. MAKING THE ALL IMPORTANT DECISION - ALL THINGS CONSIDERED

The result of liposuction procedure on your body might not be permanent, but it will have significant impact on your life and health once you choose to go through this procedure. Most medical and health professionals stress the fact that you need to consider each aspect of the entire procedure. And, even after coming up with the decision to undergo liposuction, you still need to consider several factors.

6.2. COST FOR LIPOSUCTION AND OTHER FINANCING INFORMATION

A recent survey revealed that women would choose to undergo cosmetic plastic surgery, such as liposuction, if money weren't an issue. And with the growth of people turning to liposuction procedures, there is also an increase in terms of cost for undergoing the procedure. The next dilemma facing most people willing to undergo liposuction is finding the best results at an affordable price.

When talking about the entire cost for the procedure, you need to consider all activity involved in the entire process. Visits to the surgeon, the surgical procedure itself, and post-operative care following the procedure are all contributing factors. Another factor to consider is the extent of the surgical procedure done on the body. The more complicated the procedure is, the higher the cost for it.

The credentials of the doctor could also contribute in determining the cost for a liposuction procedure. Therefore, you can expect to pay more to experienced and well-known doctors. Patients are faced with the dilemma of whether to opt for the higher cost procedures that ensure better results over cheaper ones.

6.3. POTENTIAL RISKS WITH LIPOSUCTION

When choosing a surgeon you need to find one who is honest enough to explain the risks involved instead of downplaying it. A good cosmetic surgeon is one who provides you with enough information regarding the potential risks of the surgery as well as the benefits.

According to studies relating to liposuction procedures, an estimated 1-4% of patients who undergo this procedure suffer from complications or negative outcome. This is a rare case but is not something you should dismiss altogether. The following are possible complications from liposuction procedures:

- Nerve damage
- Infection
- Adverse reaction to anesthesia
- Seizures

6.4. YOUR LIPOSUCTION PROCEDURE CHOICES

Keeping that in mind, you can now determine what type of liposuction technique to undergo to treat certain areas of the body. Proper knowledge of these variations will enable you to choose the most suitable procedure to achieve the results you want. Make sure to consult with your doctor so you can both decide on the proper procedure to use.

6.5. AREAS THAT CAN BE TREATED WITH LIPOSUCTION

Liposuction is a specific type of procedure done on certain areas of the body where there is a major fat deposit. However, it does not aim to achieve weight loss but only serve cosmetic purposes such as contouring the shape of your body.

It is important that every patient is aware of what liposuction can and cannot do for your body. In some, women undergo liposuction to reduce the size of their breasts, which results in less scarring as compared to other plastic surgical procedures.

It is also possible to perform liposuction on several different areas of the body at once, or during the same surgical operation. Here are areas that may undergo liposuction procedure:

- Inner or outer thighs
- Arms
- Waist
- Hips
- Jaw line or Chin
- Neck
- Buttocks
- Calf
- Back
- Abdomen
- Ankle

7. LIPOSUCTION PROCEDURES

7.1. THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF LIPOSUCTION PROCEDURES

It is a conscious effort on the part of medical and health professionals to look for newer types of liposuction procedures to ensure safety and efficacy. While you can expect complications to arise with any surgery, there are certain choices that entail less risk on the patient's health.

7.2. TUMESCENT LIPOSUCTION

This type of liposuction procedure is done by injecting a solution such as epinephrine, lidocaine, and saline into the fat within the body. Lidocaine serves as the local anesthetic, while epinephrine constricts the capillaries within the fat. This solution contributes to the swelling of the fat tissues and firms it up. Due to the constriction of the capillaries, it takes a while for the body to absorb the lidocaine.

The patient is no longer required to undergo general anesthetic before the procedure is performed. Some doctors would recommend this type of procedure due to the minimal loss of blood, as compared to other types of liposuction.

7.3. WET LIPOSUCTION TECHNIQUE

This type of liposuction procedure uses general anesthesia. By injecting local anesthesia that contains epinephrine to the specific area it reduces the amount of blood loss. As compared to the dry technique though, there is still a large amount of blood loss for this technique. This is because blood comprises 15 to 20% of the total amount of tissues removed from the patient's body. After this procedure is done, blood transfusion is often required.

This used to be the most common technique used in liposuction. However, the implementation of this procedure has reduced over the years as safer methods are being developed.

7.4. SUPER-WET TECHNIQUE

The same with wet technique, this one also requires general anesthesia. Then, diluted local anesthesia solution is injected into the area of the body to be treated. Unlike wet technique though, blood consists of only about 8% of the total amount of tissues removed from the body.

Its main difference from the procedures mentioned above is the amount of solution injected into the fat tissues. The solution used for this technique is reduced as compared to the tumescent and wet technique, wherein there is very minimal lidocaine involved.

7.5. ULTRASONIC ASSISTED LIPOSUCTION (UAL)

This type of liposuction procedure utilizes ultrasonic energy, which is delivered into the fat tissues of the body through a paddle or metal probe. This energy causes the fat to liquefy, thus making it easier to remove while also minimizing damage on the surrounding tissues and nerves.

Since this is a relatively new technique, surgeons proceed with caution when performing this technique. However, the introduction of this type of procedure has broadened the number of people who can now try liposuction.

Ultrasonic liposuction allows overweight individuals to undergo liposuction due to reduced level of blood loss. Meanwhile, patients who have undergone this procedure report less to no cases of post-operative pain.

7.6. POWER ASSISTED LIPOSUCTION (PAL)

Just like Ultrasonic liposuction, power assisted liposuction is a new technique. As the name implies, it involves the use of power to create an oscillating movement on the cannula as it penetrates the body fats.

Because the device used is easy to control, it enables surgeons to precisely remove the unwanted fat. The vibrations caused by the oscillating movement of the tube enables fat to break up and suction out easily. When using this technique, the entire procedure generally takes lesser time to complete.

In a recent study by the Tulane University Health Sciences Center, it was revealed that using the PAL technique leads to 30% more fat removal as compared to manual liposuction. On the other hand, there is also a reduced period of recovery time for the patient.

But, as with any other surgery, there are certain risks involved with this procedure. Therefore, patients are advised to opt only for skilled doctors who have enough expertise and knowledge on using the PAL technique.

8. PREPARATION

8.1. PREPARING FOR YOUR PROCEDURE

Before undergoing liposuction, it is important that you prepare yourself mentally and physically. Regardless of your reason for liposuction, it will have a long-term impact on your health. Making the necessary preparations before the procedure will ensure that you achieve desirable results from the procedure.

8.2. PRE-SURGICAL PREPARATION

While liposuction is a procedure that helps address problems in your body regardless of your diet choice or lack of exercise, you need to bear in mind that this is still a surgical procedure. You can help yourself eliminate the level of anxiety experienced before surgery by informing yourself on how the process works. Proper knowledge will ensure that you know what to do when the procedure goes wrong, or that you know what to expect.

It is therefore important that you work together with your surgeon in this preparation stage.

8.3. PRE-SURGICAL CONSULTATION

The consultation stage with your doctor prior to surgery is the best time to educate yourself on the entire procedure. This will also serve as your planning session with your doctor, who will discuss the following:

- Proper type of procedure for you to undergo
- What are the risks and limitations of the operation?
- The kind of anesthesia to use
- The type of facility where operation will take place
- Cost of the entire procedure
- Medications you will need during and after the procedure

- Post-operative care

Aside from these, you also need to discuss any existing medical conditions so your doctor is aware of any complications that may arise. After careful evaluation and assessment, your doctor will offer you advice and tips concerning your health. This might come in the form of guidelines on your diet, or any lifestyle modifications you might need to do following the procedure.

8.4. PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION AND PREPARATIONS

During and after your surgery, you are most likely unable to perform your 'normal' duties. The recovery stage is crucial; hence, you need to take note of these preparations so everything else is smooth sailing afterwards.

1. While this is not mandatory, some doctors recommend their patients get some blood drawn before the liposuction procedure, in case it will be needed during the surgery.
2. Arrange someone to drive you home once the procedure is through.
3. During your recovery time, you will be unable to perform ordinary chores on your own. Hence, you can enlist the help of a person or two (whether a family member, spouse, or children) to help you around the house.
4. Pack loose or comfortable clothes that you can use after the surgery.
5. Get good quality sleep the night before your surgery.

8.5. ACTUAL DAY OF THE PROCEDURE

When you arrive at the facility where your surgery is about to take place, your doctor will ask you to sign a consent form. This serves as proof that you intend to proceed with the operation while understanding the full risks involved, possible complications and outcomes, after considering other alternatives to liposuction before choosing to undergo this procedure.

The pre-op steps may vary from one doctor to another, but this is a basic procedure. Then, your surgeon will start to mark the skin of areas to be treated. After that, a picture of you will be taken so you can compare the results after the procedure is completed. You will now be asked to change into the dressing gown to get started with the surgery.

It is important to discuss with your doctor beforehand the type of anesthesia to choose because he or she might have any other instructions to give out. For instance, if you will undergo general anesthesia, you are advised not to drink or eat anything within 6 hours prior to the surgery. Doing so will avoid the possibility of an upset stomach once you've been injected with the anesthesia.

9. OTHER POINTERS TO KEEP IN MIND

These are special reminders from your surgeon before liposuction to avoid complications:

- In case you are taking birth control pills, doctors would advise to discontinue your intake and opt for another contraceptive method following the surgery. This reduces the possibility of blood clots in your legs.

- Within 7 to 10 days prior to your surgery, avoid the following types of medications: ibuprofen, aspirin, and other anti-inflammatory and non-steroidal drugs. These might contribute to excessive bleeding during and after your surgery.
- For smokers, you need to quit smoking before and after liposuction due to the risk of chest infections from the anesthesia.

10. DURING THE PROCEDURE

10.1. WHAT TAKES PLACE DURING THE PROCEDURE

Administering the Anesthesia

Any type of surgical procedure, like liposuction, begins with the injection of anesthesia, whether local or general. The term anesthesia literally means “without pain”. Hence, it is administered to help create a numbing effect on specific areas of the body where surgery is to be performed.

However, the decision on whether to use local or general anesthesia is what you should be aware of. In local anesthesia, the doctor will inject the numbing solution on a targeted area of the body. Therefore, the patient remains conscious during the entire liposuction procedure.

General anesthesia, on the other hand, is administered in two ways: through a needle injection or as gas. This will put the patient to sleep while the surgeon performs the operation. When the patient awakes following the procedure, he or she will still feel numbness in the treated area of the body with little to no pain.

The Actual Liposuction Procedure

Concept-wise, the procedure for liposuction is quite simple. However, complications could arise due to lack of experience and knowledge on the surgeon's part. Here is a basic outline on what goes on in the actual process of liposuction surgery.

Making Incisions

Once anesthesia has been administered and the numbing effect starts to take its effect on the patient's body, the surgeon can now start the first step in the liposuction procedure – creating the incisions. In some cases, extra fluids are injected before the incision is made.

Then, a tiny incision is done on the specific area of the body to be treated. The size of the incision varies from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch.

Removal of Fat

After the incision, your surgeon can now insert a narrow vacuum tube called a cannula. From the incision, the tube penetrates into the deep layers of fat. As the surgeon moves the cannula back and forth, it will cause the fat cells to break up into more manageable pieces. Then, a vacuum pump or syringe is used to suction them out of the body.

The amount of blood and other fluids lost during this process requires replacement fluid for the body.

Closing the Incisions

It depends on your surgeon's discretion whether to close the incision by stitching them up or leaving them open. Other doctors choose the latter option because it decreases the amount of bruising and swelling suffered by the patient after surgery.

10.2. POST-SURGICAL PROCEDURES

After the completion of liposuction procedure, a certain amount of fluid is maintained beneath the surface of your skin. If your doctor decides to stitch up the incision, those fluids will easily drain leading to the formation of bruises and swelling. Therefore, doctors often suggest that their patient wear elastic compression garment (think of a girdle) after the surgery. This will cause your blood vessels to absorb all those extra fluids.

Meanwhile, doctors can opt to leave the incision open several days after the procedure. This enables the fluid to drain away from the area, a few days after the surgery. You will also be asked to wear a compression garment so as to properly drain those fluids. Aside from that, you will also avoid staining your clothes with blood or other fluid.

11. IMPACT ON AREAS OF THE BODY

11.1. HOW DOES IT REDUCE AREAS OF THE BODY

As a surgical procedure, liposuction helps eliminate localized excess fat deposits in certain areas of your body. These fats are often the reason why there are certain bulges in areas such as the abdomen, neck, thighs, among other areas. With the advancement of medical technology also comes the advancement of procedures used to perform liposuction. All of these are geared toward safer procedures that achieve optimum results.

11.2. REDUCING AREAS OF THE BODY

Common areas of the body wherein there is a stubborn build up of fat include the following:

- face
- Neck
- Upper arms
- Abdomen (upper or lower)
- Flank
- Thighs (inner or outer)
- Knee
- Calves
- Buttocks

To help reduce the specific area of your body, liposuction deals with two layers of fat in your body: the superficial layer and deep compartments. The superficial layer is evenly thick throughout most parts of the body. Meanwhile, the deep compartments mostly exist in those problematic areas listed above.

You do not need to be overweight in order to have localized bulges of fat in your body. Most of these bulges are due to fat in the deep compartments. These are often caused by hereditary factors, which make them 'stubborn'

and cannot be eliminated despite regular exercise and proper diet. Thus, the only solution for getting rid of that excess fat is through surgical fat removal known as liposuction.

Once those stubborn areas have been treated, you can now achieve a more symmetrical and balanced contour of the body.

11.3. NOT A WEIGHT LOSS PROGRAM

One of the few reasons why those who undergo liposuction are dissatisfied with the result is because they were expecting to reduce weight in the process. This is repeatedly stressed by doctors and physicians alike: liposuction is not intended as a weight reduction procedure. Therefore, if you are setting this unrealistic goal, then you need to re-evaluate whether this is the right type of procedure for you.

Moreover, liposuction is often known as a contouring or body sculpting procedure. It only serves to enhance the natural contours of your body to create a more appealing physical appearance. To achieve that, fats that cause bulging in certain areas are removed to blend with its natural outline.

If you want to achieve better results, doctors would recommend that you undergo weight reduction procedures first, whether through exercise or diet, before proceeding with liposuction. This is especially important for localized fat residues wherein diet and exercise will not help you get rid of.

11.4. FACTORS TO CONSIDER

There are several factors that contribute to the success of a liposuction procedure. A few of them is the elasticity and quality of the patient's overlying skin. Once the excessive fat is removed, it will cause the skin to either shrink or contract after achieving a new profile to your body. On the other hand, if you previously have loose skin, then the procedure could cause more looseness on your skin. Hence, the result is undesirable.

There is no distinguished age wherein undergoing the procedure is much advocated. However, it is not best recommended once you are over the age of 45 or 50 because your skin has already lost its natural elasticity during this age.

11.5. LIPOSUCTION AS A BODY SCULPTING TECHNIQUE

Since it was already pointed out that liposuction is not a weight loss method, it is primarily for sculpting and re-shaping areas of your body for better symmetry. There are several body sculpting techniques available but liposuction is among the top choices. By eliminating excessive fat or skin that is non-responsive to diet changes, it produces a better shaped figure.

The best aspect about liposuction as a technique is that it is able to target specific areas where there is a major fat deposit problem. After a few weeks following the surgery, you will begin to see desired results.

Aside from improving the shape of your body, your overall self-image is also given a boost. You will start to feel more comfortable about your choices of clothes and the way you carry yourself in public. Just keep in mind that liposuction only targets specific bulging areas of your body instead of an overall weight loss. Then you will begin to enjoy the wonderful benefits of a liposuction procedure, given the fact that you had realistic goals before deciding to undergo this procedure.

12. AFTER LIPOSUCTION

12.1. AFTER LIPOSUCTION - WHAT TO EXPECT - HOW TO EVALUATE YOUR RESULTS

As a body sculpting and fat removal technique, liposuction procedure is basically done for cosmetic purposes. Because of this, results are evaluated through patient satisfaction. Aside from the avoidance of health complications and risks, there is no clear basis as to whether results are satisfactory or not. This is where proper communication between doctor and patient proves of utmost importance.

There are a few signals to look into in terms of normal post-operative results for liposuction.

12.2. WHAT HAPPENS DURING POST-SURGERY?

Immediately following your liposuction surgery, there are certain amounts of fluid that are drained from your incisions. This is completely normal. In fact, some doctors recommend a drainage tube underneath the surface of your skin within a couple days following the procedure. This will help prevent the build-up of these fluids.

Meanwhile, you might also be required by your doctor to wear an elastic garment to minimize swelling and enable your skin to fit into its new contours following the procedure. This should be worn on the treated area over a period of few weeks. Doctors would often prescribe antibiotics to their patient as a way to curtail infection.

Despite recent advancements in liposuction techniques, some level of discomfort on the patient's part cannot be totally avoided. There is still a bit of pain, swelling, burning, temporary numbness, or bleeding in the treated area. Other times, you will feel sore and stiff for a few days after undergoing liposuction.

All of these post-operative conditions are often exhibited within a few days or weeks after liposuction, so you should not worry when you suffer from any of these.

12.3. MORE ON RECOVERY GARMENTS

Doctors typically require compression garments to be worn by patients immediately after the liposuction procedure. They serve as support for the treated areas while also reducing the amount of swelling or bruising.

The types of compression garments administered vary immensely: some are snug and tight, while others allow more space. In recent years, less snug garments are produced in the market for post-operative purposes.

However, most of these garments are made up materials similar to aerobics suit or leotards wherein it fits all sizes. There is also quite a large variety of garments produced these days to make wearing it more efficient for patients. There are those that are created like underwear so they can be worn underneath other types of clothing. Meanwhile, others are loose-fitting so it can be worn over your other garments.

Wearing of compression garments vary from patient to patient though, since some find it comfortable while others don't.

12.4. RECOVERY PERIOD

Any type of surgical procedure requires gradual healing. However, most doctors would require you to do some walking to reduce the possibility of swelling. Meanwhile, this will also prevent the formation of blood clots in your leg area. On average, patients can expect to go back to work within just a few days. As for the stitches, they are either removed or disappear for about a week or up to 10 days.

However, strenuous activities are highly discouraged within a month following the surgery. This is because your body is still in its healing stage. Bruising and swelling normally appear after 3 weeks, while others take up to six months before they are fully gone.

Your surgeon would often schedule visits so they can monitor the progress of your condition. Meanwhile, they will also try to assess, depending on your condition, whether there is a need for additional procedures. During your visit, take time to ask your doctor questions if you are suffering from any unusual symptoms such as tremendous pain or excessive bleeding.

12.5. SEEING THE RESULTS

Due to the presence of bruising or swelling during your recovery period, it is not until you are past this stage wherein you can see noticeable difference in the shape or look of your body as a result of the surgery. However, you can expect these changes to improve and become more pronounced after a period of 4 to 6 weeks. During that time, swelling is completely gone. It is when you reach the 3-month period where you can visibly see the new contours of your body.

Now that you have achieved that shape, you must enhance it by modifying your unhealthy diet and looking at exercising more regularly.

13. POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS

13.1. POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS

Liposuction should not be taken lightly. Like any surgical procedure, liposuction has its own share of possible complications and side effects. These complications and side effects can range from minor to life-threatening.

13.2. DEATH RATE IN LIPOSUCTION

Studies reveal that for every ten thousand liposuction surgeries, the risk of death is lowered to three. Meanwhile, other findings say it's twenty to a hundred. Medical experts assume there is a higher death rate if surgical procedures are performed simultaneously.

Truth is, liposuction is absolutely a risky procedure that serious complications and side effects cannot be avoided. In unfortunate cases, it has even led to death.

13.3. POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS OF LIPOSUCTION

Even with skilled doctors, there is still room for mistakes that could potentially be hazardous to your health. The most common complications are:

1. Infection

Serious infections are rare after liposuction because most doctors prescribe antibiotics as a precaution for their patients. In rare cases, necrotizing fasciitis is the name of the lethal bacteria. This bacteria causing infection eats body tissue spreading until your life is at risk.

2. Fluid Imbalances

During the procedure, your doctor might inject you with a large amount of fluid inside your system. Sad to say, this can cause fluid imbalances that result in kidney malfunction, cardiac problems and excess fluid in the lungs.

3. Perforations

4. Anesthesia

Some people tend to suffer adverse reactions to anesthesia. You need to discuss your allergies or history with your doctor so he can assess whether it is safe enough to proceed with the operation.

5. Embolisms

This term refers to a medical condition which involves the obstruction or occlusion of a blood vessel by an embolus. An embolus is defined as material that has not dissolved and is carried by the blood.

6. Nerve damage

This is a condition wherein you feel needle-like pains in certain areas of your body such as the face, stomach, etc. This condition is called neuralgia.

7. Emotional and sexual changes

Some reports indicate various incidents of post-liposuction depression. This condition is similar to postpartum depression. Patients might feel extreme forms of sadness that may lead to suicidal tendencies. This situation will not last for a long time but it is still advisable to address it with your physician.

13.4. POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF LIPOSUCTION

After undergoing liposuction, there are some inevitable side effects that a patient might feel. Here are some of them:

1. Wrinkling

Some people can experience wrinkling in their skin after liposuction especially if your skin elasticity is vulnerable to stretch marks and other skin dimpling. Skin wrinkling can be minimized through operative massage. For this reason, it is recommended that you discuss these wrinkling episodes with your cosmetic surgeon before undergoing the procedure.

2. Swelling and Bruising

After liposuction, especially in the abdominal area, one might experience some swelling and bruising due to the downward pull of the fluids injected inside the body. This condition can be relieved through massage and compression.

3. Pain and Discomfort

This is another common side effect after the surgery. The feeling is simply similar to the soreness you feel after a rigorous workout. But after two weeks of medication, the pain disappears.

4. Muscle spasms

Muscle spasms are common and will quickly disappear after the surgery. It is common to experience muscle spasms in the area of your liposuction. This should disappear fairly quickly after your surgery.

5. Sensation Changes

A person may feel high or low skin sensations after the operation. This can also lead to numbness and other skin irregularities. A regular skin massage should be done to lessen this feeling of discomfort.

14. IF YOU ARE UNHAPPY

14.1. WHAT TO DO IF YOU AREN'T HAPPY WITH THE RESULTS

Whether you have realistic cosmetic goals or not, there are several reasons why some patients are dissatisfied with the result of their liposuction procedure. However, there are also several ways to deal with this dilemma and find satisfactory results. You can opt to consult with your doctor on this for a more guided decision while ensuring the safety of your health.

14.2. ABOUT PATIENT SATISFACTION

According to medical research, 90% of patients who undergo liposuction and other types of cosmetic surgery are satisfied with the results. Different factors are considered when coming up with these figures.

Satisfaction percentage is largely due to the specific type of procedure done on the patient and the results achieved. For instance, neck liposuction achieved high levels of satisfaction from patients who underwent this procedure.

Another consideration for patient satisfaction is time. Some patients attest that although they are not initially satisfied with the results of the procedure, they become happier as time progresses. Meanwhile, other patients become less satisfied with time.

14.3. SATISFACTION AFTER LIPOSUCTION

Several studies are conducted to analyze the level of satisfaction of patients. This is of utmost importance, considering the level of popularity of this particular surgical aesthetic procedure. With many variables to consider, patient satisfaction is essential in evaluating the success of the procedure.

Here are a few findings regarding patient satisfaction gathered by a free-standing surgery center:

- 8 out of 10 people who underwent liposuction are happy with the results,
- Half of the patients who undergo liposuction are of the ideal weight, while 14% are obese,
- The abdomen is the most common area treated for liposuction,

- People who undergo a single liposuction session had more than one area of their body treated.

In determining the level of patient satisfaction following a procedure, the attitude of the patient prior to the procedure is taken into consideration. This is mostly done after a certain period of time wherein results have become visible and patients achieve a well-shaped body.

14.4. BREAKDOWN OF TARGET AREAS

As mentioned, the level of patient satisfaction is largely impacted by the specific type of liposuction procedure done. A large percentage of patients who choose to undergo liposuction address more than one area of the body. Meanwhile, only 24% of the patients comprise those who treat a single area of the body in one session. The keyword here is multiple, reflected by the following figures:

- Liposuction on 2 body areas – 24%
- Liposuction on 3 body areas – 24%
- Liposuction on 4 body areas – 16%
- Liposuction on 5 body areas – 4%
- Liposuction on 6 body areas – 4%
- Liposuction on 7 body areas – 2%
- Liposuction on 8 body areas – less than 1%

14.5. DEALING WITH UNSATISFACTORY RESULTS

Although most people undergoing liposuction enjoy the benefits, there are a few others who have less than desirable results. If unrealistic cosmetic goals are out of the way, it could be due to some irregularity in the surgical operation of the fat.

Irregularity or waviness of the surface is a common problem faced by most people following their liposuction procedure. Although this is often associated with less experienced surgeon, there were a few cases of the same result even with highly skilled surgeons.

Since most doctors anticipate this condition, they create multiple tiny incisions in the area to be treated. Meanwhile, smaller cannulae are also used to penetrate the incision and into the body fat. Another technique used by most surgeons to avoid irregularity is cross suctioning. By superficial and deep suctioning, it reduces the possibility of feathered edges around the area of your body.

As soon as these irregularities show up, most patients are advised to not proceed with another procedure yet until after 6 to 12 months. For some patients, massage is enough to deal with it. However, there might come a point wherein surgical correction is needed. When this happens, surgeons will suction those areas and fill them in with fat grafts. For loose skin, it can be removed through excision.

Cellulite is another problem following liposuction, since it worsens in some cases. For this, ultrasonic liposuction is the recommended form of treatment. This type of liposuction procedure is also effective in removing fibrous fats that achieve a better result when compared to traditional liposuction techniques.

15. FINAL WORDS

15.1. TAKING CARE OF YOUR BODY BEFORE AND AFTER THE LIPOSUCTION PROCEDURE

What Should You Do Before Your Surgery?

Research is the most important thing you should do before selecting liposuction. Begin by reading articles, reviews and testimonials posted on different blogs, forums and community sites. If you have any friends, relatives, or family members that have undergone this particular surgery, take time to ask them relevant questions. Never rush into making your decisions. Whether you like it or not, you need to have a specific and well laid-out plan before proceeding with any liposuction procedures.

Liposuction can lead to death. For this reason, choosing the best plastic surgeon in town should be your top priority. Never rely on instinct; do your research all over again. There are many top-notch license surgeons everywhere and all you need to do is look for them. In most cases, your surgeon will evaluate your overall medical history before he or she tells you if you are really physically fit for liposuction.

If you are fit enough, your surgeon should provide you various reading materials and instructions on what you need to do before the surgery. It's a common rule not to smoke a month before your surgery. This no-smoking policy will help lessen the possible complications during the liposuction procedure, which includes chest infection after administering your anesthesia.

What Will You Do After Your Surgery?

You will feel an extreme form of stress and sore after a liposuction procedure. For this reason, you should ask someone to take care of your needs. If you have children, it's better to have a nanny or your relatives watch over them.

Usually, your plastic surgeon will ask you to wear compression garments after your surgery. There are a variety of compression garments available in the market. In fact, there are those specified for traditional or open drainage. Wait for advice from your plastic surgeon before removing the compression garment. Exercise will also help you recuperate faster but you still need to wait for further instructions before doing so.

When you are healed, you still need to see your surgeon for monthly check-up. This is to make sure you are experiencing the good benefits from the surgery and avoid any serious complications. To avoid confusion, jot down all your important appointments with your surgeon

Your overall health must be your top priority after your liposuction procedure. Make sure you contact your surgeon anytime you need his or her immediate help. Your surgeon is your friend, tell them everything. Never keep a secret. These surgeons are trained to understand your physical and emotional outbursts while undergoing recovery.

15.2. MORE TIPS FOR TAKING CARE OF YOUR BODY

1. Immediately after your surgery, take time to rest your body. However, you must not stay in bed the whole day. You can also do some gentle walking to promote healthy circulation.

2. Keep yourself hydrated by drinking adequate amounts of fluids. Meanwhile, monitor the level of hydration for your body by ensuring that your urine is light-colored. Do this monitoring every 4 to 6 hours.
3. Although there are no specific dietary restrictions following your surgery, you must stay away from acidic or greasy foods. This will contribute to nausea.
4. For diabetics, monitor your level of sugar 3 times a day during the first couple of days after the procedure.
5. Try to refrain from engaging in highly physical activities within the first two weeks immediately after you had liposuction.
6. You must wait a minimum of two weeks before you proceed with your normal exercise routine.