



Subiaco

St John of God Medical Clinic
Suite 215, 25 McCourt St, Subiaco WA 6008
T: (08) 9380 0333 F: (08) 9380 0300

E: hello@plasticsurgerycentre.com.au www.plasticsurgerycentre.com.au

Murdoch (No Mail)

Suite 51, Wexford Medical Centre
3 Barry Marshall Parade, Murdoch WA 6150
T: (08) 9380 0333 F: (08) 9380 0300

SUCTION ASSISTED LIPECTOMY (Liposuction)

Liposuction (lipoplasty or suction assisted lipectomy) is a surgical technique that removes unwanted deposits of fat from specific areas of the body. It is not a substitute for weight reduction, but a method for removing localised deposits of fatty tissue. Liposuction may be performed as a primary procedure or may be combined with other surgical techniques. The best candidates for liposuction are individuals of relatively normal weight who have excess fat in particular 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 ageing 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 itself will not improve areas of dimpled skin known as "cellulite".

Liposuction is performed utilising hollow metal surgical instruments known as cannulas, which are inserted and directed through the area of excess fat cells. Each cannula is attached to a vacuum source, which provides gentle suction to remove the fat. There are varieties of different techniques used for liposuction. Ultrasound assisted liposuction (UAL), such as VASER uses solid metal probes attached to a source of high frequency sound waves to break up the fat making the liposuction process less traumatic to the surrounding structures. Power assisted liposuction (PAL) such as the Microaire uses a rapidly vibrating cannula to reduce the effort required to remove the fat and therefore, also reduce the trauma of collection to surrounding structures.

Liposuction may be performed under local or general anaesthesia. It requires the infiltration of fluid containing dilute local anaesthetic and adrenaline into areas to be treated. This can reduce discomfort at the time of surgery, as well as reduce post-operative bruising. Generally, the procedure is performed more safely under a general anaesthetic where the dose of local anaesthetic agents delivered can be kept to a safe limit whilst minimising pain and discomfort to the patient. Support garments are worn for up to 6 weeks after surgery to control potential swelling and promote healing, to provide comfort and support. Please ensure you have purchased your garment before your surgery date, ensuring you bring this to hospital with you, as this will be placed on you whilst in theatre.

Alternative Treatment

Diet and exercise may be of benefit in the overall reduction of excess body fat. Non-surgical means of reducing fatty deposits such as "Cool lipo", "laser lipolysis" and "Lipodissolve" are commonly practiced by non-surgeons and have variable results in different individuals. None are as effective in the removal of large amounts of excess fat as physical removal using liposuction however they may have a role where a more subtle result is acceptable in patients who wish to avoid surgery.

Risks and Side Effects

All surgical procedures involve risk. It is important that you understand those involved with liposuction. An individual's choice to undergo a surgical procedure is based on their comparison of the risk to potential benefit. The majority of patients do not experience complications however, you should discuss this with your surgeon to make sure you understand the risks, potential complications, and consequences of liposuction.

- Patient Selection. Individuals with poor skin tone, significant medical problems, obesity or unrealistic expectations are not good candidates for liposuction.
- Allergic reactions. Rarely, local allergies to tape, suture material, or topical preparations utilised in liposuction procedures have been reported. More serious reactions to drugs administered during surgery and prescription medicines may require additional treatment.



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- **Asymmetry.** Due to factors such as skin tone, bony prominence, and muscle tone, which can contribute to normal asymmetry in body features, it may not be possible to achieve a perfectly symmetrical body appearance through liposuction procedures.
- **Bleeding.** While unusual, it is possible to have a bleeding episode during or after surgery. If post-operative bleeding occurs, it may require emergency treatment to drain accumulated blood or rarely may require a blood transfusion. Non-prescription herbs and dietary supplements can increase the risk of surgical bleeding. Please discuss with your surgeon whether anything you are taking needs to be avoided prior to your scheduled procedure.
- **Change in skin and skin sensation.** A temporary decrease in skin sensation may occur following liposuction. Diminished or complete loss of skin sensation that does not totally resolve could potentially occur.
- **Chronic pain.** Chronic pain and discomfort following liposuction is unusual.
- **Infection.** Infection is unusual following liposuction but if it occurs, treatment including antibiotics or additional surgery may be necessary. Although extremely rare, life-threatening infections such as necrotising fasciitis could occur after liposuction, regardless of the technology utilised.
- **Long-term effects.** Subsequent alterations in body contour may occur as a result of ageing, weight loss or gain, pregnancy, or other circumstances not related to liposuction.
- **Pulmonary complications.** In extremely rare cases, fat droplets could become trapped in the lungs to create a possibly fatal complication called fat embolism syndrome. Pulmonary complications may occur secondarily to blood clots (pulmonary emboli) or partial collapse of the lungs after general anaesthesia. Should these complications occur, you may require hospitalisation and additional treatment. In some circumstances, pulmonary emboli can be life-threatening or fatal.
- **Scarring.** The incisions created for liposuction are minimal and good wound healing after a surgical procedure is expected. However, abnormal scars may occur within the skin and deeper tissues in rare cases. Such scars may be unattractive and of a different colour than surrounding skin. Additional treatments, including surgery, may be necessary to treat abnormal scarring.
- **Seroma.** While new technology has reduced the incidence and severity of seromas associated with liposuction procedures, fluid accumulation is possible and could require additional treatments or surgery.
- **Skin discoloration and/or swelling.** This could occur and in rare situations, persist for extended periods of time. The incidence of permanent skin discoloration is rare.
- **Skin contour irregularities.** As liposuction selectively targets fat cells, leaving other essential tissues intact, skin contour irregularities and depressions in the skin are unlikely but possible. Visible and palpable wrinkling of skin can occur, particularly when large quantities of fat cells are removed or the skin is lacking good elasticity. Post-operative skin contour irregularities could necessitate additional treatments including surgery.
- **Skin loss.** Additional procedures, including surgery could be necessary in the unlikely event that skin loss occurs following liposuction.
- **Surgical shock.** Liposuction could conceivably cause severe trauma, particularly when multiple or extensive areas are treated in a single session. Although serious complications are a rarity, infections or excessive fluid loss could lead to severe illness and even death. Should surgical shock occur following liposuction, hospitalisation and additional treatment would be necessary. Individuals undergoing procedures to remove large volumes of fat are at greater risk of complications. Patients contemplating large-volume liposuction - that is, greater than 5L - may be advised to undergo post-operative monitoring and aftercare.
- **Local anaesthetic toxicity.** There is the possibility that large volumes of fluid containing dilute local anaesthetic that is injected into fatty deposits during surgery may contribute to fluid overload or systemic reaction to these medications. Additional treatment including hospitalisation may be necessary.
- **Other.** While we have attempted to assist you in building realistic expectations for your liposuction treatment, you may be disappointed with your surgical results. However infrequent, it may be necessary in your case to perform additional surgery to improve results.



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Photographs

Pre-operative photographs may usually be taken. These do not show your face. They are important aids in planning and performing surgery and become a permanent part of your patient record. Intra-operative photographs may be taken during your surgery if we are required to do so by Medicare. Post-operative photographs may also be taken.

Should you not understand any of the foregoing, or should you want further information, please ask. Occasional questions will arise after you have left your consultation. Feel free to call for additional information. If necessary, additional consultation visits can be scheduled. Find out all you need to know. It is our desire that all patients are fully informed.

This information included in this sheet is general information only. Please contact the surgery on (08) 9380 0333 or alternative phone numbers as shown on your appointment card if you have any concerns regarding your post-operative recovery.