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BE SCULPTURED

Liposculpture - Questions and Answers

Here are some of the most commonly asked questions asked about liposculpture...

What are the benefits of liposculpture? Liposculpture is a major refinement in the technique of liposuction. Liposculpture is performed under local anaesthetic which makes it is much easier to achieve a regular, even result to the areas treated. This is because it is possible to stand up and allow the effect of gravity to be seen on the areas treated towards the end of the procedure. This enables a much more predictable and pleasing result to be achieved.

Second, as no general anaesthetic is needed for liposculpture as opposed to a liposuction procedure, the inherent risks associated with a general anaesthetic are avoided.

Third, liposculpture involves the injection of fluid into the fatty tissues before the procedure is performed. This fluid contains the local anaesthetic (lignocaine) and also a medication which effectively constricts blood vessels (adrenaline). Adrenaline vastly decreases the amount of bruising that occurs with liposculpture while the local anaesthetic produces effective relief of any discomfort during the procedure and for up to 12 hours afterwards (sometimes longer).

Fourth, liposculpture is performed out of hospital. It is day surgery. There is no need for the person having liposculpture to stay overnight in hospital, have blood transfusions or even fluid intravenously. A half day only is required to perform the procedure, and you are encouraged to remain active following the procedure, walking on the same day or soon after, and often returning to work after a few days. Time off work and normal activities is kept to a minimum. People often think they need to take holidays to have liposculpture. This is not true, one or two days off is all that is required in most cases.

If liposculpture is so good, why aren't all procedures done this way?

Liposculpture takes time to achieve the best results. The average procedure lasts 2 hours or longer, especially when multiple areas are treated. In contrast, liposuction performed under general anaesthesia must be done in a shorter time as longer anaesthetic time increases anaesthetic risks. People who have had both procedures say how well they feel after liposculpture compared to traditional liposuction under general anaesthesia. The recovery period is shorter with much less bruising and there is minimal or no pain. Now liposculpture is performed by many doctors from many specialties. At our clinic, Dr Heckenberg is specially trained in liposculpture, is dedicated and will take the necessary time to get the right result for each person.

Is liposculpture safe?

A landmark article in the prestigious DERMATOGRAPHIC SURGERY journal looked at the results of over 15,000 cases of liposculpture performed in America in 1994 and 1995. Complications during the procedure were few, as were problems following the procedure, and the level of complications was much less than for conventional liposuction surgery. Bruising is minimal, but does occur in most cases. It lasts for 10 to 14 days. Infections theoretically can occur, but are extremely rare and antibiotics are given before and after the procedure. Local areas of numbness can occur in the areas treated, although these usually resolve within a few weeks of treatment, but may take longer.

Who will benefit from liposculpture?

This is a very broad question. Many people will benefit from liposculpture, and a wide spectrum of Australians are interested in the technique. The number of people having this procedure performed in the USA is increasing dramatically and has increased 5-fold in the past six years to the point that is by far the most commonly performed cosmetic procedure. It has been seen on television and in the printed media, although it is only now that the benefits of liposculpture using the new tumescent technique are being understood by the general public.

Some common examples of people who can be helped by the technique are:

Women who have had children and are concerned by the unwanted accumulations of fat that childbearing has brought... saddlebags, full thighs, hips, a 'pot-belly' and accumulations of fat in other areas, often resistant to the most rigorous gym workouts and exercise regimes.

Men who have developed love handles above the hips or accumulations of abdominal fat, not necessarily related to lack of exercise, but often due to natural decline in the production of growth hormone, which occurs with age. You may be able to blame your genes for many of these deposits as the tendency to deposit fat in some areas is genetically pre-determined.

Women and men who want to have the streamlined appearance and have the best shape that they possibly can. For such people the permanent removal of even small amounts of fat from localised areas can make a good figure dramatically better.

People who have been significantly overweight, have lost weight and are now near their goal, but still have problems with local accumulations that will not budge despite diet and exercise.

Men who have unwanted accumulations of fat and breast tissue over the breasts as a result of hereditary or other factors.

What about my skin? Won't it be wrinkly?

The skin is a remarkable organ. An article published in Dermatologic Surgery confirms what liposculpture surgeons already know, there are few problems with looseness of the skin after liposculpture procedures, even in people at the age of 40 or beyond. This is due to contraction of the skin as a result of the liposculpture procedure itself. An experienced liposculpture surgeon can produce skin retraction that would have been thought impossible by conventional surgeons more than a decade ago. Skin contracts in all areas treated by liposculpture and excision of any skin at all is almost never necessary.

What is involved in liposculpture?

Preparation for liposculpture is remarkably straight-forward. After an initial consultation some blood tests are ordered to ensure that there is no problem such as anaemia. It is important that aspirin and anti-inflammatory medications (Feldene, Voltaren etc.) not be taken for two weeks before the procedure. They decrease the effect of platelets in the blood and can increase the amount of bruising and chances of bleeding. An antibacterial soap is used for two days prior to the procedure. Antibiotic tablets are started the night before the procedure to minimise any chance of infection. After the procedure, a garment is worn over areas treated for one to two weeks (sometimes longer). This is quite a light, comfortable garment and easy to wear under normal clothes, so no-one should be able to notice.

How is liposculpture performed?

After the saline solution is introduced into the tissues through small holes in the skin, and the local anaesthetic in the fluid has had enough time to work, small tubes or cannulae are introduced into the fatty layers. Suction is applied to the cannulae while they are gently moved through the tissues and the unwanted fat is removed in a progressive fashion until the desired result is achieved. Most cannulae used are 2mm to 3mm or less in diameter (sometimes 4mm), and are substantially narrower than the cannulae used in conventional liposuction.

Can liposculpture be used to treat people with obesity?

Liposculpture can be used to help people who are significantly overweight to reduce localised problems over the abdomen and other areas. This may help with the way that overweight people dress and make them feel better about their bodies. Many such people describe the liposculpture as a 'kick start' and go on to continue to lose weight, especially when these central abdominal fat cells are removed.

Is there an age limit?

There is no theoretic age limit for the performance of liposculpture provided that there are no significant health problems that may interfere with the medications used or recovery.

Are there scars?

As the cannulae used in this technique are very small, the incisions used can often be concealed in the natural creases of the body. The holes used are not stitched after the procedure and heal to a fine skin-coloured line approximately 2mm in length within a few months of the procedure. It is unlikely that anybody will guess from these healed incisions that you have had liposculpture, unless, of course, you tell them.

Will liposculpture work for cellulite?

Some people often mistakenly call local fatty accumulations over the thighs cellulite, and these can definitely be helped with liposculpture. True cellulite (localised dimpling of the skin especially over the thighs and buttocks) is due to the distribution of fibrous bands within fatty tissue. Attempts to divide these fibrous bands have been tried, but the level of success is variable, so at present no technique can reliably treat this problem, although in situations where excess fatty tissue is also a problem, removal of this may well improve overall appearance by making specific dimples less obvious.

Please list any questions that you have about the procedure so they can be answered before your procedure.

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