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BE SCULPTURED

Liposculpture - Questions and Answers

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

What is liposculpture? Liposculpture is a body changing tool. Liposculpture is performed under Dr Klein's "tumescent local anaesthetic" with micro-cannulas. This is because it is possible to stand up and allow the effect of gravity to be seen on the areas that have had liposculpture towards the end of the procedure. You are also able to move yourself into the appropriate positions to adequately remove the fat from specific areas to change the body shape. This, in my experience, enables a more predictable result.

As no general anaesthetic is needed, risks associated with a general anaesthetic are avoided. Sedation has its risks too, but careful dosing and monitoring during the procedure reduces these risks, and to avoid too much sedation which can lead to general anaesthesia.

Liposculpture involves the injection of fluid into the fatty tissues before the procedure is performed. This saline solution contains the local anaesthetic drug (lignocaine) and also a medication which constricts blood vessels (adrenaline). Adrenaline decreases the amount of bleeding and bruising while the local anaesthetic reduces discomfort during the procedure and for up to 12 hours afterwards (sometimes longer).

What is Dr Klein's "tumescent local anaesthetic technique" and why can larger doses of lignocaine (numbing drug) be injected into the fatty tissue and then liposculpture performed, compared to other areas of the body, eg. muscle, skin?

Slow absorption of lignocaine from the fatty tissue is the answer. The reasons for the slow absorption of lignocaine are: 1. Subcutaneous (under the skin) fat has a low volume of blood flow, 2. Lignocaine is lipophilic (is attracted to fat) and is easily sequestered in (moves into) fat. 3. Diluted adrenaline in the saline solution ensures vasoconstriction (constriction of blood vessels), thus minimising systemic absorption and bleeding. 4. The large volume of tumescent solution itself compresses blood vessels by hydrostatic pressure (the pressure from the large volume of saline solution compresses the blood vessels). 5. The very low dilution (more saline solution compared to the dose of the drug) of lignocaine in Klein's solution does not achieve the gradient required for systemic absorption. 6. Most of the solution is removed during aspiration (suction), minimising the duration available for absorption.

Do I need to stay overnight in hospital?

Liposculpture is performed as day surgery. There is rarely a need for the person having liposculpture to stay overnight in hospital, or to have blood transfusions. A half to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a day is required to perform the procedure and to stay in the hospital recovery. You are encouraged to remain active following the

procedure, walking soon after, and often returning to work after 1 week or possibly after a few days. Time off work and normal activities is usually kept to a minimum.

How long does liposculpture take?

Liposculpture takes time. Taking the time to do the procedure is paramount. Small calibre cannulas (micro-cannulas) are used. The average procedure takes 2-4 hours, especially when multiple areas have liposculpture. At Be Sculptured, Dr Heckenberg is trained specifically in liposculpture and she has a Fellowship in Lipoplasty from The Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery and Medicine (ACCSM), is dedicated to the procedure of liposculpture and liposculpture is the only cosmetic procedure she performs. Performing the same procedure often is necessary to acquire appropriate skills for any procedure. She has performed over 1500 liposculpture procedures. She also has Specialist registration in General Practice (FRACGP) and a Diploma in Obstetrics and Gynaecology (DRANZCOG). MED0001158434

What are the results from large studies on liposuction / liposculpture:

1. Safety of Tumescent Liposuction Under Local Anesthesia in 9,002 Consecutive Patients May 2021 Boeni, Roland MD^{*,†}; Waechter-Gniadek, Paul v.
https://journals.lww.com/dermatologicsurgery/Abstract/2021/05000/Safety_of_Tumescent_Liposuction_Under_Local.24.aspx
2. Another landmark article in the DERMATOLOGIC SURGERY journal looked at the results of over 15,000 cases of liposculpture performed in America in 1994 and 1995. Safety of tumescent liposuction in 15,336 patients. National survey results [C W Hanke¹](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/7743109/), [G Bernstein](#), [S Bullock](#)
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/7743109/>
https://journals.lww.com/dermatologicsurgery/Abstract/1995/05000/Safety_of_Tumescent_Liposuction_in_15,336.17.aspx

In these studies, involving a large number of patients, it was concluded that complications during the procedure were few, as were problems following the procedure, and the level of complications was less than for conventional liposuction surgery which is performed under general anaesthesia.

Bruising is usually minimal but does occur in most cases. It lasts for 10 to 14 days, sometimes longer. Infections theoretically can occur but are 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 to a few months of treatment, but may take longer.

3. A detailed article revealing the “Unfavourable outcomes of liposuction and their management” with fewer patient numbers (600) and the importance of appropriate training in this procedure (2013) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3901919/>

Who is suitable for liposculpture?

This is a very broad question. Many people may be suitable for liposculpture, and a wide spectrum of Australians are interested in the technique. Careful patient selection is however necessary. It is not a weight loss tool. The number of people having this procedure performed in the USA is increasing

dramatically and has increased 5-fold in the past few years to the point that is by far the most commonly performed cosmetic procedure. It is only recently that liposculpture using the tumescent technique are being understood by the general public, although the method has been utilised for decades (since the late 1980's).

Liposculpture isn't suitable for everyone. Only patients with a BMI of under 35 will be considered but only after they have been properly assessed during the consultation. <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/bmi-calculator>

Smoking increases the level of carbon monoxide in the blood, which deprives tissues of oxygen. Blood supply is a major concern during any surgical procedure. Mixing smoking and cosmetic surgery can specifically result in increased pain, loss of skin, infections, death of tissue or fat cells, delayed healing, thick scarring, permanent vessel damage, or blood clots. Smokers should cease smoking 6 weeks prior to the procedure or not have the procedure at all.

Patients with body dysmorphia disorder (BDD) are inappropriate for liposuction / liposculpture or any type of cosmetic surgery or procedure. Body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) is a mental illness. People who have this illness constantly worry about the way they look. They may believe an inconspicuous or non-existent physical attribute is a serious defect. They respond to this by performing repetitive acts such as mirror checking or comparing their appearance with others. The severity of BDD varies. For example, some people know their feelings aren't rational or justified, while others are almost delusional in their conviction. BDD causes severe emotional distress. It is not just vanity and is not something a person can just 'forget about' or 'get over'. The preoccupation can be so extreme that the affected person has trouble functioning at work, school or in social situations. Any part of the body can be targeted. You may seek out numerous cosmetic procedures to try to "fix" your perceived flaw. Afterward, you may feel temporary satisfaction or a reduction in your distress, but often the anxiety returns and you may resume searching for other ways to fix your perceived flaw. Treatment of body dysmorphic disorder may include cognitive behavioural therapy and medication.

Some common examples of people who have had the procedure done are:

Women who have had children and are concerned by the unwanted accumulations of fat that childbearing and general ageing have brought... the outer thighs, full thighs, hips (flanks), abdomen and accumulations of fat in other areas, which may be resistant to the most rigorous gym workouts and exercise regimes.

Men who have developed fat above the hips (flanks) or accumulations of abdominal fat (fat that exists between the skin and the muscle), not necessarily related to lack of exercise, but often due to natural decline in the production of growth hormone, which occurs with age. Genetics may determine many of these fat deposits as the tendency to deposit fat in some areas is genetically pre-determined.

Women and men who wish to change their proportions. For such people the removal of small amounts of fat from localised areas may change body shape and proportions.

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. Excess skin laxity may preclude some individuals.

Men who have unwanted accumulations of fat 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. Liposuction / Liposculpture itself “de-weights” the skin by removing many of the underlying fat cells and therefore an element of skin retraction or shrinkage will occur. Skin will contract in areas treated by liposculpture and excision of any skin in most selected cases is usually not necessary but that is dependent on the individual and patients need to be thoroughly assessed during the initial consultation, including a skin quality assessment and patients asked of their expectations.

What is involved in liposculpture?

During the initial consultation, you will be assessed for suitability for the procedure and you must be in good health. You will be assessed for body dysmorphia. You will be provided written pre-operative instructions. You will require a second consultation (either in person or via video) prior to any procedure that may be booked (at least 7 days prior to surgery). You will require a referral from a general practitioner (not involved in any cosmetic medicine or surgery practice). It is important that aspirin and anti-inflammatory medications (Nurofen, Naprogesic, 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 anti-bacterial soap should be used for two days prior to the procedure. Antibiotic tablets are started the night before the procedure to reduce the 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 may be worn under normal but usually looser clothing.

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 blunt tubes (cannulae) are introduced into the fatty layers (located under the skin and on top of the muscles). Suction is applied to the cannula while it is moved back and forth through the tissues and the unwanted fat is removed in a progressive fashion. Most cannulae used are 2mm to 3mm or less in diameter (sometimes 4mm) and are substantially narrower than the cannulae used in older liposuction methods. The movement of the cannula through the fatty tissue will “strip” the fat cells away from the connective tissue and the suction merely takes the fat cell away from the site of disruption. Fat is not removed “like a vacuum cleaner” as each fat cell removed needs to be parted from its supportive tissue. That is the reason it can take quite a few hours to do.

Can liposculpture be used to treat people with obesity?

NO, but liposculpture can be used in people who are slightly overweight to reduce localised problems, eg. abdomen, arms, etc. Many such people may describe the liposculpture as a 'kick start' and go on to continue to lose weight, especially when central abdominal fat cells are removed, but that is dependent on the motivation of the individual. Liposculpture is really not suitable for those with BMI >35. BMI is calculated by your weight divided by your height squared (eg. 70kg / (1.7m x 1.7m) = 24.2)

<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/bmi-calculator>

And it is not suitable to for those with visceral fat (fat stored deep inside the belly, wrapped around the organs, including the liver and intestines). Diet and exercise or possibly weight loss surgery, eg. gastric sleeve, gastric banding, gastric bypass surgery may treat this type of fat.

What is lipoedema and can liposuction / liposculpture be performed?

YES. Lipoedema is an abnormal build-up of fat in your legs and sometimes arms. It can be painful and affect daily life. It is more common in women and usually affects both sides equally. Compression therapy can sometimes help manage lipoedema. As well as changing diet possibly, massage therapy and water-based activities may improve the condition. Liposculpture may help too, which also changes the body shape by removing the excess fat cells. But compression is also necessary after liposculpture/ liposuction.

Is there an age limit?

There is no theoretic age limit for the performance of liposculpture provided there are no significant health problems that may interfere with the medications used or recovery. It's important to be honest about medication you are taking as the local anaesthetic drug (lignocaine) can have interactions with some drugs and may increase risk of toxicity, which could affect the heart or brain or even cause death. This is the main reason why excessive liposculpture or liposuction cannot be done in a single procedure. At our clinic, only patients over the age of 18 are accepted.

Are there scars?

As the cannulae used in this technique are very narrow, the incisions used can often be concealed in the natural creases of the body. The incisions (holes) used are not sutured after the procedure and allow drainage of the excess anaesthetic fluid post-operatively. They usually heal to a fine skin-coloured line approximately 3-5mm in length within a few months of the procedure. They may become lighter in some people and possibly darker in some people or darker skinned people (hyperpigmentation) or develop a raised edge (hypertrophic scars or keloid scars).

Will liposculpture work for cellulite?

NO. 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 the fatty tissue may make specific dimples less obvious. This is very variable amongst individuals however.

Does liposculpture provide the same results for each patient?

NO. Viewing "before" and "after" photographs of patients having liposuction / liposculpture are only relevant for that particular patient and do not necessarily reflect the results other patients may experience, as results may vary due to many factors including the individual's genetics, diet and exercise.

Is the level of pain and recovery the same for each patient?

NO. Different patients will heal differently, and have different pain thresholds and will therefore experience different recovery times for different activities.

If I am dissatisfied with any aspect of my care, may I make a complaint?

YES. You may raise your concerns directly with the doctor, you may contact the clinic or facility, make a complaint to the Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC), or call the Cosmetic Surgery Hotline on 1300 361 041.

What are the Australian legal requirements (from 1st July 2023) for having cosmetic surgery, including liposuction/ liposculpture?

1. All patients seeking cosmetic surgery must have a referral, preferably from their usual general practitioner or if that is not possible, from another general practitioner or other specialist medical practitioner. The referring medical practitioner must work independently of the medical practitioner who will perform the surgery and must not perform cosmetic surgery or non-surgical cosmetic procedures themselves.
2. You must be assessed for underlying psychological conditions such as body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) using a validated psychological screening tool for BDD. This screening tool will be in the form of a validated questionnaire and that is mandatory requirement for anyone considering cosmetic surgery.
3. You must have at least 2 pre-operative consultations. The first consultation must be with the medical practitioner who will perform the surgery, or another health practitioner, eg. registered nurse, who works with the medical practitioner, who will perform the surgery. At least one of the 2 consultations must be in person with the medical practitioner who will perform the surgery. Other consultations can be in person or by video.
4. There must be a cooling-off period of at least 7 days AFTER the patient had had 2 consultations before the surgery can be booked, performed or a deposit paid.
5. A separate consent form is required for photography

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

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.