

LIPOSUCTION

Liposuction

Liposuction, also known as liposculpture or suction assisted lipectomy, is a technique to remove unwanted fat deposits. The unsightly distribution of body fat is usually due to an inborn tendency to deposit fat in one particular area of the body, most commonly the hips. Other areas include the neck, arms, abdomen, chest, loins, thighs, inner side of the knees and the ankles.

What is involved in the surgery?

Liposuction is often carried out as a day case procedure, usually under a general anaesthetic. A narrow metal tube with openings at one end is inserted through a small incision in the nearby skin. It is attached to a strong vacuum pump which sucks out the fat as the metal tube is drawn back and forth within the area of excess fat. The process removes tunnels of fat leaving the small blood vessels and nerves intact. The skin is then expected to shrink afterwards to give an improved contour and shape to the area being treated,

Who can benefit from liposuction?

Patients who have a localised collection of fat with good quality skin are the best candidates for this surgery. However, you **may not** be suitable for liposuction alone if you suffer any of the following conditions:

- Your body mass index (BMI) is greater than 30
- You smoke, or use other nicotine-containing products
- You have scars from previous abdominal operations such as liver surgery
- You are not fit enough for a prolonged general anaesthetic
- You have loose skin in the area to be treated
- Dimples and wrinkles of the skin, sometimes called **cellulite** will **not** be improved by liposuction.

Patients with unrealistic expectations may also be unsuitable for this procedure.

Will it last?

Fat cells are thought not to be regenerated in adult life. Therefore their removal by liposuction will give a permanent change in contour and be independent of any changes in your body weight.

What are the consequences and possible complications of surgery?

You can expect considerable **bruising** which will be uncomfortable and at times painful. The larger the area treated the greater it will be. Some people bruise more easily than others. The discolouration of this bruising will usually last for about a month, but the lumpiness and swelling of deep bruising can take up to six months to disappear, particularly when the abdomen or ankles have been treated.

Smoking

Patients are advised that **smoking before their procedure will increase complication rates significantly.**

It is Mr Venus's policy that patients must have stopped using any tobacco or nicotine-contacting products at least 4 weeks before and after surgery to minimise the risk of complications.

Common complications

Wound infection is perhaps the most common complication. Such infections, which generally respond well to antibiotics, are usually superficial. Although small areas of wound breakdown are sometimes noted, these heal well over a few weeks when the wound is dressed regularly.

Uncommon and rare complications

As with every surgical procedure or operation, there are always risks. Although serious complications of this operation are uncommon, they can include:

- **Copious bleeding** requiring a return to theatre to remove the blood and seal the blood vessels.
- **Seroma** or excessive fluid build-up under the skin of the operated area. Although this condition may require drainage with a needle, it usually settles down without the need for a further operation.
- **Fat necrosis** occurs when fat cells lose blood flow and die. The liquefied fat cells can then harden underneath the skin over time, causing lumpiness.
- **Poor wound healing** (hypertrophic or keloid scar). In these instances, the scar can permanently thicken, turn red, be painful and disfiguring. Usually it takes up to 12 months for a wound to heal and demonstrate the final result.
- **Necrosis** (skin death) generally occurs in patients who have not stopped smoking before their operation. With this condition, the skin dies and there is an open wound of variable size. Generally, if this wound is dressed daily, it will heal up in a couple of months, with the final result usually quite acceptable.
- **Additional procedures**, such as scar revision or further liposuction, may be needed
- **Loss of sensation** in the skin.
- **Asymmetry** in the appearance of the scars
- **Chronic pain** is a very rare complication
- A **poor result** such as unacceptable visible deformities, wound disruption or loss of sensation are possible. Infrequently, it is necessary to perform additional surgery to improve the result.
- **Skin contour irregularities** and depressions may occur and visible and palpable wrinkling of skin can occur. Residual skin irregularities at the ends of the incisions are always a possibility, as is skin pleating, when there is excessive redundant skin. This may improve with time, or it can be surgically corrected.
- **Bruising and swelling** normally occur after this surgery. The skin in or near the surgical site can appear either lighter or darker than surrounding skin. Although uncommon, swelling and skin discolouration may persist for long periods and, in rare situations, may be permanent.
- All surgery leaves scars, some more visible than others. Although good wound healing after a surgical procedure is expected, **abnormal scars** may occur within the skin and deeper tissues. Scars may be unattractive and of different colour than surrounding skin. Scar appearance may also vary within the same

scar, exhibiting contour variations and “bunching” due to the amount of excess skin. Scars may also be asymmetrical (having a different appearance between the right and left side of the body). There is also the possibility of visible marks in the skin from sutures. In some cases scars may require surgical revision or treatment.

- **Blood clots in the legs or lungs** (DVT/PE) are uncommon but serious complications. You should stop taking HRT or the oral contraceptive pill 4 weeks before surgery and use alternative methods in this time.

What should I do after surgery?

Most patients having liposuction can be treated and go home the same day. However, some patients need to stay for 1 night in hospital . Prior to discharge, you'll receive pain medication that can be taken at home. As you are still in the recovery phase of the operation when discharged, it's important to arrange in advance for someone to assist you for the first week following your operation. All patients are encouraged to walk as soon as possible after their procedures to prevent complications and to ensure blood flow quickly returns to normal. However, vigorous exercise should be avoided. You will leave the hospital with your wounds dressed and wearing a compression garment for support. Once these dressing are removed, you will need to continue to wear a your garment for 6 weeks, day and night if possible, to compress the area to help reduce swelling.

Around the house

Recovery takes four to six weeks. Although each patient's recovery is unique, most feel groggy for at least a week. During this time avoid lifting and strenuous movements. Mobilise gently and don't over do it! Sutures are dissolvable and do not need to be removed. Bruising can take up to 2 weeks to disappear and swelling up to three to six months. Scars will remain visible although they will continue to fade for up to two years. Strenuous physical activity should be avoided for four weeks as this can produce bleeding, bruising and increased swelling, as well as putting strain on the closure of the skin, thereby risking wound disruptions.

Return to work

Most patients can return to work after a few weeks. However, if your job involves strenuous physical activity, you will need four to six weeks of recovery time before returning.

Driving

Allow around two to four weeks of recovery time before driving. You must feel safe to make an emergency stop before driving. This is a decision that can only be made by you and you must take responsibility for making this decision.

**Examples of pre- and post-operative photos of Mr Venus patients can be found
on the website**

www.mattvenus.co.uk/gallery/