

Lipolysis

Lipolysis is a technique popularized in recent years for the removal of localized deposits of fat. Many people can maintain a proper weight or diet to a desired level, exercise “religiously” and still not be able to lose the fat from certain areas below the waist as such. Even a perfectly proportioned upper body does not prevent upper and lower hips, abdomen or knees from accumulating excessive fat reservoirs often referred to “love handles”, “saddle bags”, etc. The technique of lipolysis in properly trained hands is one way to remove these fat deposits with tiny ½” incisions. The technique is reasonably safe, but in no way is intended as a treatment for *generalized obesity*.

Dieting & Exercise

First and foremost, dieting and exercise should be used as a method to remove unwanted fat: most will come off this way. Unfortunately, these methods are not always successful treatment for the elimination of some bothersome fat deposits. The hips, waist, abdomen, buttocks, knees, and ankles can be very resistant to dieting. Heredity and hormonal imbalances are also factors which add to the difficulty of eliminating these fat bulges.

The Lipolysis or Suction Technique

The technique of Lipolysis has been used since the late 70’s in thousands of cases with creditable results and a low incidence of complications and problems. Small ¼” incisions are made in as inconspicuous locations as possible often away from the bulge, and a special surgical instrument inserted which removes fat through suction. A few tiny sutures are used to close the skin and tight elastic type dressing is worn for a week. The results can produce a pleasing correction of the bulges and fat contour deformity with minimal scarring.

Out-Patient or In-Patient

The procedure is often done in the out-patient facility, except when the patient has serious medical problems or multiple areas with large quantities of fat to be removed, in which case an overnight stay at the hospital may be suggested. We always reserve the right to hospitalize patients should they have problems after surgery.

Anesthesia

For smaller areas either local or general anesthesia can be used. For multiple, bigger areas general anesthesia is necessary.

Recovery Time

Recovery time from the discomfort of surgery is usually 48 to 72 hours, but for a week or so, general activity should be slightly limited. Walking and self-care, however, is encouraged from the first post-operative day.

Work and Activities

For office type work, a patient can often return to work in 3-5 days. For heavy work, it may take 10-14 days. Stretching and mild aerobic type exercise can be helpful beginning at 2 weeks and at 3 weeks, the patient may return to moderate sporting activities.

Results

Results can show immediately, but it will take up to 2-4 months to be appreciated. This is due to swelling and bruising, which takes time. In general, the results are permanent, but, if excessive weight is regained, the operated area can increase in size, although it would probably be less than would have been the case had the person not undergone "Lipolysis". Rippling or waviness can also occur with excessive weight gain.

Massage used post-operatively promotes good healing.

Complications

Although the originators of the technique report few complications some should occasionally be expected, such as rippling, corrugation, dimpling, depressions, or inadequate removal in some area. Excessive bleeding can occur causing localized accumulation of blood with the possible necessity of surgical evacuation. Collections of serum or clear fluid, also occur in some people.

As with any operation there is some concomitant risk to life, health, and well being. It should also be appreciated that excessively saggy skin and orange-peel dimple skin would not be changed by removing underlying fat. The patient must have a realistic expectation of the changes which might occur, and what can reasonably be expected. For maximum improvement in some people, it might be necessary to go back and operate a second or even third time, especially if the fat bulges are excessively large. Charges should be expected for such secondary procedures.

In an occasional patient blood transfusions could be required. Such an event would occasion additional risks of blood incompatibility reactions, hepatitis and other possible blood transmitted illnesses.