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Liposuction (Suction-Assisted Lipectomy / Liposculpture)

Liposuction, also known as suction-assisted lipectomy or liposculpture, is a surgical procedure designed to remove localized deposits of excess fatty tissue and improve body contour. It is one of the most commonly performed body contouring procedures and can produce reliable and aesthetically pleasing results when performed in appropriately selected patients.

During the procedure, a small metal tube called a cannula is inserted beneath the skin through tiny incisions. The cannula is moved back and forth in a controlled manner to break up fatty tissue, which is then removed using vacuum suction. Modern liposuction techniques make use of very small cannulae, allowing for smoother contouring and more refined sculpting of the body.

The improvement in body contour following liposuction occurs because the overlying skin shrinks and adapts to the new contour after the fat has been removed. For this reason, good skin elasticity is important in achieving an optimal result. Younger patients generally have better skin contraction and smoother contour outcomes, whereas older patients may have some residual looseness or wrinkling of the skin after surgery. Liposuction is therefore best suited to patients with good skin tone and localized fat deposits.

Liposuction can be performed on many areas of the body, including the abdomen, hips, thighs, waist, chin, arms, back, and other localized areas of excess fat. It is important to understand that liposuction is intended for body contour improvement and is not a treatment for generalized obesity or a substitute for weight loss.

In some cases, liposuction may be combined with other surgical procedures designed to remove excess skin and tighten tissues. Combining these procedures may allow improved contouring while limiting the size of surgical incisions. For example, liposuction beneath the chin may sometimes be combined with a facelift procedure to remove excess skin and tighten the underlying facial muscles. Similarly, abdominal or thigh contouring procedures may combine liposuction with surgical skin excision where skin contraction alone is unlikely to achieve a satisfactory result.

When liposuction is performed on the thighs, the small incision is commonly hidden within the buttock crease, making the scar discreet and well concealed. Abdominal liposuction incisions are

usually placed near the navel or within natural skin creases to minimise visible scarring. The incisions used for liposuction are typically less than one centimetre in length.

The procedure is usually performed under general anaesthesia, although smaller volume liposuction may sometimes be performed under local anaesthetic depending on the individual case. Either a dry technique or tumescent technique may be used. The tumescent technique involves introducing a specialised fluid into the treatment area to reduce bleeding, bruising, and discomfort during fat removal.

Modern liposculpture techniques allow fat to be removed from very superficial layers beneath the skin using extremely narrow cannulae. This helps create smoother contours, reduces the risk of lumpiness or irregularities, and encourages contraction of the overlying skin for a more refined aesthetic result.

Bruising and swelling are normal and temporary following liposuction. The degree of swelling and bruising depends on the extent of the procedure and the areas treated. A compression or pressure garment is typically worn continuously for approximately three weeks after surgery to help reduce swelling, improve contour, and support healing.

Temporary numbness in the treated areas is also common following liposuction. Most or all sensation usually returns within six to eight weeks, although in rare cases some numbness may persist for longer.

Patients are generally required to stay in hospital overnight following the procedure. Most patients are able to return to light daily activities within approximately seven days, although swelling may continue to improve gradually over several weeks to months. Strenuous exercise and heavy lifting should be avoided until advised by your surgeon.

As with all surgical procedures, liposuction carries potential risks and complications. These may include bleeding, infection, contour irregularities, asymmetry, prolonged swelling, fluid accumulation, skin looseness, numbness, scarring, and the possible need for further procedures. Your surgeon will discuss the risks, expected recovery, and realistic outcomes during your consultation.