

# **Liposuction**

Liposuction is a technique used by plastic surgeons to improve the appearance of localized fatty bulges. It is done by making small (usually less than one-half inch) incisions through which a small metal tube is inserted under the skin. This tube is attached to a high suction machine, and when the tube is moved through the fatty tissues, some of the fat is suctioned out. This can be used to improve the contour of these fatty bulges.

I usually perform liposuction under general anesthesia, although in some circumstances it may be done under local anesthesia. Afterward the area will be sore for a while, and will also be bruised and swollen. It may take a few weeks for the bruising to go away, and it may take several months for the swelling to disappear. Activity should be limited for about six weeks postoperatively to allow the tissues to heal properly and to avoid complications. The patient wears a compression garment (like a girdle) usually for about six weeks postoperatively. Depending on the type of work you do, you may need to be off work for one to six weeks after the operation.

## **Alternate Treatment Options**

Weight loss can sometimes be helpful to improve localized fatty bulges. However, sometimes people make it down to their ideal body weight and still have these localized bulges. Exercise can also be helpful to improve body contours.

Liposuction is not a weight loss technique. In other words, liposuction will not significantly reduce the weight in patients who are overweight. Patients who are bothered by excess body fat in general are best treated by diet and exercise programs, or perhaps by procedures such as gastric bypass surgery.

## **Risks of Liposuction**

Although liposuction is generally a safe procedure, like all operations there are some possible complications that could develop. Listed below are some of the risks of liposuction.

- Infection can develop after any operation, including liposuction. If infection should develop, antibiotics or further surgery may be necessary to control the infection.
- Bleeding problems can develop postoperatively that may lead to increased bruising, or possibly another operation may be required to control bleeding.

- The appearance of the area treated with liposuction may not match your expectations. Perhaps we may remove too much or too little fatty tissue, or occasionally the area may develop an irregular surface contour, such as waviness. We do everything we can to try to make the area look perfect postoperatively, but it's possible that there may be changes postoperatively that you may not be completely happy with or that may require revision surgery.
- The area treated with liposuction may have abnormal sensation for quite some time. Usually that will improve to near normal, but not always. You may be left with some diminished sensation, or sometimes unpleasant sensations may be present.
- After liposuction your body will continue to age and this may change the contours of the treated areas. If your weight changes significantly, the fatty bulges that were treated with liposuction may recur.
- Rarely patients may have some change in the color of the skin overlying the area that was treated.
- There may also be general medical complications that can develop with liposuction. These risks could include, but are not limited to, pneumonia, heart problems, blood clots or other materials that can go to the lungs and make you sick, excessive blood loss or other fluid problems, and other risks, including death.