

Liposuction

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Liposuction

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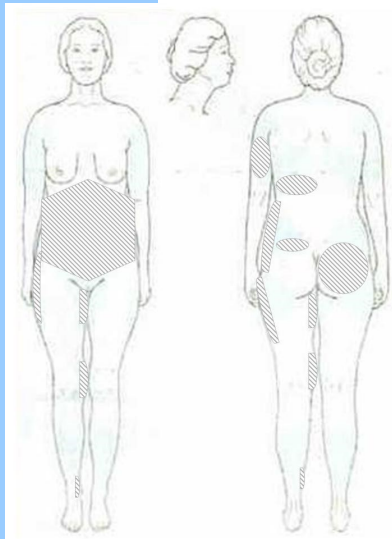
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Liposuction, is a technique to remove unwanted fat deposits. It can be used to contour abnormal deposits of fat. It is widely used within cosmetic surgery and sometimes is termed liposculpture or suction assisted lipectomy.

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, tummy, loins, thighs, inner side of the knees and the ankles. The growth of a benign fat tumour (lipoma) can also be a disfigurement, and in men fatty swellings can develop behind the nipples to look like female breasts (gynaecomastia).



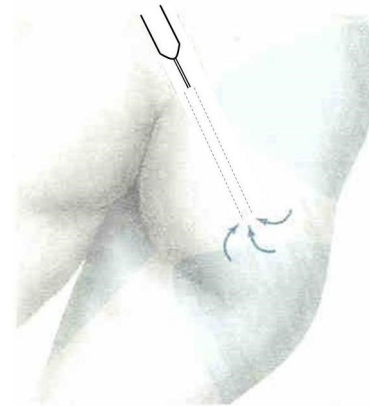
Areas of the Body commonly treated

What can be done?

If you have a localised area of fat it is possible to reduce its bulk by an operation called Liposuction. A narrow metal tube is inserted through a small incision in the nearby skin. It is attached to a strong vacuum pump which 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 should then retract but if elasticity is not present, then skin folds and cellulite can appear.

There are some variants in the techniques. Professor Frame injects the area to be treated with solutions (wet or tumescent technique). Suction is usually applied with a powerful vacuum machine, but it is some- times perfectly adequate to use a simple syringe for small areas. Ultrasound assisted lipectomy is another variant but the most modern equipment is the Power Assisted Liposuction machine (PAL). Other techniques include Smart-lipo, fat dissolving drugs, transdermal laser techniques and liposuction associated with radio frequency probes (BodyTite®) is becoming available, but these are not yet fully approved within Professor Frame's practice.

A thin tube is inserted through a small incision in the nearby skin



What are the consequences?

You can expect mild to severe bruising which may be uncomfortable and at times painful. The larger the area treated the greater it will be. Some people bruise more easily than others. The discoloration 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.

As swelling can take a long time to settle you may not see the full benefit of the operation for up to six months. If you have a tendency to be anaemic, or if you were to have a large area treated, you may need to take iron tablets for a month. You can expect some numbness in the treated skin which lasts for several months. Sometimes shooting pains can arise where subcutaneous nerves have been traumatised. These are temporary.

You will have small stab scars at the sight of the insertion of the suction cannulae. There is a small risk in some people that these scars may stay red for a while but they are usually sited in less obvious areas.

If you are having treatment to your legs you may find that your ankles are swollen for a few weeks and if your ankles themselves have been treated, they may stay swollen for a few months. Pressure support garments after liposuction are mandatory. Manual lymphatic and homeopathic treatment can be extremely useful post-operatively.

Will it last?

Liposuction will give a permanent change in contour but will be dependent of any changes in your body weight. Fat cells not removed by liposuction will, however, respond to changing nutrition habits and irregular regenerating areas of fat can appear, unless a steady body weight is maintained. New fat cells may appear if the body wishes to activate "stem cells".

What are the limitations?

It is important for you to understand that liposuction is not a treatment for obesity. The amount of fat that can be removed from a localised area is limited by what is safe and the natural limit that can be removed. Therefore it may not be possible to slim down an area as much as you might like. Further treatments may need to be carried out in the same area.

In certain situations the skin is lax and loose. Liposuction in these areas will then tend to leave the skin more loose and it may be recommended that a skin excision be carried out to correct this, either at the same time as the liposuction, or as a second procedure. This is most likely in the abdomen, after pregnancy or weight loss, the buttocks or the neck. Dimples and wrinkles of the skin, sometimes called cellulite will not be improved by liposuction and may become more apparent.

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