



The Skinny on Liposuction

Liposuction is the most popular cosmetic surgical procedure, with over 360,000 liposuction procedures performed in the United States in 2013. Ideal candidates for liposuction are individuals who have good skin elasticity and are near their normal weight. People in good general health who want to tone and reduce localized pockets of fat on the body generally achieve excellent results with liposuction. Common areas treated with liposuction include the abdomen, hips, flanks (love handles), thighs, knees, back, upper arms, and neck.

By Arnold Breitbart, M.D., F.A.C.S.

The liposuction procedure is performed as an outpatient procedure, commonly under either local anesthesia or sedation anesthesia. After the area is numbed with local anesthesia, a thin suction tube is inserted through a small incision to suction the unwanted fat. Incisions are tiny and placed within inconspicuous hidden sites. Following the procedure, patients wear compression garments for a few weeks to help reduce swelling. Improved body shape can be seen even within the first week, but gets better over the next several weeks and months as all swelling resolves.

Over the past 30 years, advances in liposuction have been directed at making the procedure more safe and effective. One of the earlier advances has been tumescent liposuction, where a dilute solution of local anesthesia and epinephrine is injected into the areas to be treated. Another advancement – power-assisted liposuction – uses a vibrating suction tube, which helps to break up the fat while it’s being suctioned. Ultrasonic liposuction was introduced almost 20 years ago, where an ultrasound device is used during the procedure in order to soften and melt the fat, making it easier to suction. More recent advances have used radiofrequency energy or lasers to improve the effectiveness of the liposuction.

In my own practice, I prefer the use of SmartLipo Triplex™ laser liposuction. I have performed thousands of liposuction procedures over the past 25 years, and for the past several years have been using the SmartLipo™ laser in virtually all my liposuction cases. During the SmartLipo™ liposuction procedure, a tiny tube is inserted through the skin into the fat. Laser energy is then delivered through the tube to the fat and overlying skin, causing the fat to liquefy and the overlying skin to tighten. A small liposuction tube then removes the unwanted fat, resulting in a much improved contour with tightening of the skin.



FEMALE ABDOMEN
BEFORE & AFTER

MALE ABDOMEN
BEFORE & AFTER

SmartLipo™ liposuction is especially effective in treating areas where the fat is of stiffer quality, such as the love handles, back, and male chest. There is also better skin tightening than with traditional liposuction, and works especially well to improve skin tone of the abdomen, thighs, upper arms, and neck. There is generally less bruising than with traditional tumescent liposuction, as well as less swelling and a quicker recovery time, with patients back to work in as little as 1-3 days. For many patients, local anesthesia alone can be used. This can be supplemented with sedation anesthesia given by a board certified anesthesiologist if the patient desires, especially when multiple areas are treated.

Liposuction is a safe, effective treatment for localized excess fat deposits. Unlike non-invasive fat reduction treatments, which require multiple sessions and only partially reduce the excess fat, liposuction, especially when performed by an experienced board-certified plastic surgeon, can precisely and completely treat multiple areas of the body in a single procedure. As a minimally invasive procedure, liposuction can provide a dramatic improvement in body shape with a quick recovery time.

Dr. Arnold Breitbart is a board-certified plastic surgeon practicing in Long Island and Manhattan. For more information, visit DrBreitbart.com, or call 516-365-3511.