



Spire Healthcare

Treatment summary

Liposuction

What is liposuction?

Liposuction, also known as liposculpture, is an operation to improve your body shape by removing unwanted fat from areas of your body. Liposuction can remove fat that you have not been able to shift with diet and exercise. It can change the shape of your body, but it is not a treatment for weight control or obesity, and it cannot remove cellulite or stretch marks.

The results of liposuction can be long-lasting. If you maintain a healthy weight and exercise regularly your new shape will last. If you put on weight, fatty bulges may re-appear.

Liposuction is usually done under general anaesthesia. This means that you will be asleep throughout the procedure and will feel no pain. If only a small area of fat is to be removed, local anaesthesia may be used

instead. This means that you will be awake during the procedure, but the area being treated will be completely numb.

Liposuction may be carried out as a day-case procedure, with no overnight stay in hospital. However, if you are having extensive treatment, you will probably need to stay in hospital for one night. Your surgeon will explain how you can expect to look after having liposuction, and will discuss the associated risks and alternatives to the operation.

About the operation

There are several different liposuction techniques. Your surgeon will advise you which method is most suitable for you. Depending on how much fat you are having removed, the operation may last from one to two hours.

Wet liposuction

Once the anaesthesia has taken effect, your surgeon will inject a fluid mixture containing a salty solution, local anaesthetic and adrenaline into the fatty area being treated. This helps reduce bleeding, bruising and swelling and makes it easier to remove the fat cells.

A cut will be made in your skin and a thin metal tube called a cannula will be inserted. This will be attached to a vacuum pump or a syringe and will be moved about vigorously within the fatty tissue to suck out the fat and the fluid.

For larger areas, more than one cut may be made to reach all the fatty deposits that are being treated. The cuts will be closed with stitches.

A variation of the wet technique is tumescent liposuction, where a larger volume of fluid is injected.

Dry liposuction

This method does not use an injection of fluid into the fatty area but the suction and cannula are used in a similar way. It can result in more bleeding and bruising.

Depending on the extent of your operation, you can expect considerable bruising, which can be painful and take about a month to disappear. There will also be swelling that may not completely settle for up to six months. You will have scars where the incisions were made and the skin in the treated area may not be totally smooth.

Liposuction is a commonly performed and generally safe surgical procedure. For most people, the benefits are greater than the disadvantages. However, all surgery carries an element of risk.

Specific complications of liposuction are rare but can include:

- the development of fluid-filled areas under the skin, which may need to be drained with a needle
- fat getting into one of the blood vessels, which could travel in the veins and cause a blockage in the lungs
- numbness in the treated area that can last for several months, but can be permanent
- damage to internal organs, which may require surgery to repair and can occasionally be fatal
- serious disruption of the fluid balance of the body, which in very rare cases can cause breathing problems and be fatal
- unusually red or raised scars (called keloid scars) which some people have an inherited tendency to form
- an unexpected allergic reaction to the fluid used for wet liposuction

It is possible that you won't be satisfied with your appearance after the operation.

The chance of complications depends on the exact type of operation you are having and other factors such as your general health. Ask your surgeon to explain in more detail how any risks apply to you.

To find out more about having liposuction in a Spire Healthcare hospital, please contact your local Spire hospital.



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