



## **Lowe Plastic Surgery (LPS)**

### **Dr. Lowe's Facts about Liposuction**

#### **How do I get started?**

It is important prior to surgery for patients to spend some time educating themselves about the pros and cons of liposuction. Although patients who undergo liposuction are typically happy, this elective operation is not for everybody. The big risks of surgery are pain, bleeding, contour irregularity, and over-resection or under-resection fat. Read the educational materials provided and on our website including consent forms prior to your surgery. Make sure that your surgeon is Board Certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery, a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) and American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS). Please check out websites and links at: [www.drjlowe.com](http://www.drjlowe.com)

#### **Do I need a Liposuction?**

Patients with localized fat deposits, minimal weight changes, little tissue redundancy, or under 40 are usually the best candidates for liposuction alone. However, it can be an excellent addition to most body contouring procedures. Patients considering liposuction need to decide if the risks are worth it or not? Liposuction is not a replacement to diet and exercise. In fact liposuction is best suited for patients in good shape with contour irregularities in areas like the neck, arms, breast, trunk, and thighs. Once the fat has been removed it is gone forever, but other fat cells can expand to fill the area. It is best for patients to avoid weight gain and instead lose weight the first several months after the procedures. Garments are required to control swelling and re-drape the skin and soft tissue after the procedure. Dr. Lowe combines liposuction with a number of cosmetic and reconstructive procedures to ensure the best results. A frank discussion with a board certified plastic surgeon will help patients make the right decision about this procedure.

#### **If liposuction covered by health insurance?**

Liposuction by definition is a cosmetic surgery procedure. It is not covered by insurance as a stand-alone procedure. Some patients have contour irregularities following reconstruction that may be treated with liposuction cannulas but this is included in revision medical coding. Dr. Lowe will often use liposuction during breast reductions, breast reconstruction, scar revisions, or flap reconstruction and it is not considered cosmetic in these situations. Many patients undergoing medically covered procedures choose to pay for liposuction to enhance the cosmetic outcome. Patients are encouraged to look at photos of liposuction online or in our office before surgery. Dr. Lowe will discuss these issues during the course of the consultation and consent process.

#### **What is the difference between liposuction under local or general anesthesia?**

There are a number of different ways to perform liposuction. Most plastic surgeons performing significant liposuction prefer patients to be under anesthesia to ensure patient comfort and safety. Isolated areas of fat may be removed with liposuction under local anesthetic. Local procedures require preparation and local injection that can be well managed in certain areas. In our practice body contouring procedures are priced based on time and complexity. Patients requiring less work and time are rewarded by a smaller fee. Patients rarely complain of significant pain following liposuction regardless of the technique. A consultation with a board certified plastic surgeon allows patients to determine the technique best suited for them.

#### **What is the best technique for liposuction?**

There are a variety of techniques used to remove fat. Most techniques are about surgeon comfort and ease than about outcomes. Legitimate liposuction techniques include: conventional, ultrasound, power-assisted, and laser. All external approaches have failed to be effective or predictable to date. Every year a technology or marketing tool is introduced and every year most are disproven. The problem is they sound good but are very expensive, and patients who fail to see results after paying a lot are the real victims. If it sounds too good to be true, it is too good to be true. There is nothing smart about "smart-liposuction," except that it is not effective, sounds

cool, and the manufacture gets rich. There are many technologies that hold promise now and in the future. Rest assured that once a technology is proven at a fair price, Dr. Lowe will offer it to his patients. It is best not to be the first patient to have a procedure, but also not the last. It is hard enough to get consistent, lasting, and satisfactory results even with scientifically proven techniques. The best technique depends on the patient's anatomy, preference, and willingness to compromise. Many patients combine liposuction with other procedures such as facelifts, tummy tucks, breast lift, or fat grafting. Plastics surgeon help patients choose the best option.

### **Will other people know I had liposuction?**

All true liposuction procedures require access through small incisions in the skin. Multiple incisions are required for cross-hatching that allows for a natural result. Current trends and techniques have resulted in changes in the way surgeons deal with different areas. Plastic surgeons try to place incisions in the natural creases or folds of the body to conceal the scar. Dr. Lowe will review scar treatment once the incisions heal. Scars typically look the worse at 2 months and then improve by 6 months. Prominent scars are rare but can be improved with minor revision or laser treatment. It is better to under treat an area than to over treat it. Contour irregularities can be seen due to surgeon error, complications, poor compression, or patient genetics (some patients just scar more). The best way to avoid evidence of liposuction is to follow post-operative instructions on massage, diet, and compression. The need for skin tightening or resection surgery in combination with liposuction is usually obvious, but sometimes it may not be clear. No patient wants skin resection if they do not have to. Patients on occasion try liposuction alone, but know revision is likely. Sometimes the skin re-drapes better than expected, and other times the skin sags requiring touch-up. Patients with major weight loss, multiple children, large fat deposits, or over 40 usually have skin redundancy. Patients should have a frank discussion with their plastic surgeon to help them make the right decision.

### **Does the effect of liposuction last forever?**

The results of liposuction do not last forever. Adult patients have a set number of fat cells, and when those cells are removed with liposuction they are gone forever. Unfortunately, the other fat cells can enlarge to fill the space. Large weight gain following liposuction can result in contour irregularities in unusual areas. Patients are encouraged to lose weight before surgery and avoid weight gain after surgery. Some patients are unable to lose weight before surgery, and liposuction can be a catalyst for a healthy lifestyle and future weight loss. Patients who loose even a small amount of weight after liposuction are proven to be significantly more satisfied. It is noteworthy that there are isolated fat deposits, in the saddle bag or neck in woman, and the belly or neck of men that are simply unresponsive to diet. Patients with isolated genetic fat deposits are ideal candidates for liposuction, and their results are long-lasting in most cases.

### **Does future revision cost a lot?**

The cost for revision is limited for patients who experience minor complications following liposuction when returning to the original surgeon. Most revisions can be address with a simple in-office procedure performed under local anesthetic. In some cases, revision surgery is necessary to address more complex issues. The kind of big results plastic surgeons and patients expect often carry with them greater risks of revision. Patients should follow post-operative instructions closely and wear garments religiously to limit revision rates. Patients usually should wait for 4-6 months to fully judge clinical results. Dr. Lowe performs a number of revisions on patients who are unhappy with a previous surgeon. Most of these patients had liposuction at a spa or with a poorly trained "cosmetic surgeon." Dr. Lowe recommends patients first return to their board certified plastic surgeon to discuss common concerns and minor complications. Patients should talk to their surgeon about the risks and potential complications of elective liposuction.

### **Where and when should I have surgery?**

One of the most important decisions for patients considering liposuction is where and when. Large liposuction procedures can be performed at a hospital with overnight stay or surgical

facility with home care. The benefit of a hospital setting is overnight pain management and care. Patients in a surgical facility will be given a period of recovery and then go home the same day. In general, small liposuction procedures of less than 4 liters are better in outpatient setting and larger amounts are better in inpatient setting. Most patients require very little assistance at home the day after the procedure, feel better at one week, and recovery fully by one month. Although Dr. Lowe performs most liposuction in his office based surgical center, each patient should make their own decision of when and where they should have surgery.

### **What are the restrictions after surgery?**

The recovery from liposuction is usually predictable. Patients are asked to limit activity for 2-3 weeks after surgery. Patients wear a support garment or girdle for 2 weeks day and night and for two weeks at night thereafter. Some patients require drains to help decrease fluid collection and control swelling. Most drains used in this situation stay for 1-2 days, but bigger surgery may require drains for longer. Sutures usually stay in place for 2-3 weeks and fall out on their own. Patients will not be able to see the full results of liposuction for several months. Patients report swelling, numbness, contour irregularities, and minor pain for up to 6 months after liposuction.

### **What about patient safety?**

There are a variety of safety concerns related to liposuction. Many of the concerns are related to post-operative swelling and have been reviewed. However, in most cases the safety of liposuction is most dependent on the surgeon and facility. Liposuction is an elective operation reserved in for patients in good health in an outpatient setting. Dr. Lowe is a real plastic surgeon, who performs real surgery, in a real surgical center. As a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) he is required to follow guidelines designed to ensure the best patient safety and outcomes. Dr. Lowe proudly performs cosmetic surgery in accredited hospitals and surgical facilities. Most of his cosmetic patients undergo surgery at his certified in-office operating suite, Associates Surgery Center of Oklahoma (ASCO). ASCO is fully certified by the American Association for the Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities (AAAASF). For further information about safety and credentials go to: [www.AAAASF.org](http://www.AAAASF.org) or [www.drjlowe.com](http://www.drjlowe.com)

### **Should I wait and think about my options?**

Liposuction is an important lifestyle decision. Although the procedure carries limited risks, the visible benefits can be subtle. Patients require a period of recovery, diet, massage, and compression. Patient should choose a board certified plastic surgeon that they trust, takes time, reviews risks, and puts safety first. One of the most important aspects of the procedures is patient care and follow-up. Although surgeons cannot pay all the cost of revision it is usually best to stick with the surgeon you choose to ensure the best outcome at the best price. When possible, patients should talk about their plans with physicians, family members, and significant others. Patients should have realistic expectations regarding the surgery, recovery, and results. Liposuction is often the right thing for the right person

### **What are Dr. Lowe's take home points?**

1. Review your plastic surgeon's results (look at pre and post-op photos)
2. Recovery is usually 1-2 weeks, but results take 3-6 months
3. Understand risks (contour irregularities, skin rippling, and swelling)
4. Control weight before and after liposuction (do not gain weight after surgery)
5. Cancel incision in natural creases to avoid a visible scar
6. If you have excess skin liposuction alone will not work
7. Most liposuction is quick with a short recovery
8. Large liposuction is performed at a hospital with overnight stay
9. Surgeon and facility certification and safety matters
10. Pick and stick with your surgeon when possible