

# CONSENT FOR BODY CONTOURING SURGERY

## Dr. James B. Lowe – Plastic Surgery

### BODY CONTOURING SURGERY INFORMATION SHEET AND INFORMED CONSENT

#### **Instructions**

This is an informed consent document that has been prepared to assist your plastic surgeon to inform you concerning body contouring surgery, its risks, and alternative treatment.

*It is important that you read this information carefully and completely. Please initial each page, indicating that you have read the page and sign the consent for surgery as proposed by your plastic surgeon.*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Body contouring surgery is an operation frequently performed by plastic surgeons. Body contouring procedures involve operations that change the general shape of a patient's body: pannus removal (panniculectomy), tummy tuck (abdominoplasty), buttock lift, thigh lift, arm lift, and liposuction. These procedures are performed for a variety of reason such as massive weight loss, skin excess, or local fat deposits. Body contouring procedures are often combined with other procedures to enhance overall appearance or to improve function.

Pannus removal may be covered by your insurance company because of functional limitations or rash. A cosmetic procedure such as a tummy tuck not only addresses the abdominal fat but also tightens the abdominal wall, improves the belly button, and removes a great deal of skin. Cosmetic surgery procedures such as a tummy tuck, liposuction, flank reduction (flankplasty), or other body lifts are not covered by your insurance and require a separate fee.

The best candidates for this type of surgery are individuals who are looking for improvement, not perfection, in the appearance of their body. These procedures are not performed as a weight loss program, but can help jump start a healthy life style. Many areas of fat and skin excess are resistant to diet and exercise and will respond best to surgical treatments. It is important to note that body contouring procedures are not without risks. There is almost always a trade off with these procedures such as scaring, contour irregularities, and numbness that is often permanent. Realistic expectations, good health, and psychological stability are important qualities for a patient considering body contouring surgery. Dr. Lowe will do his best to explain the procedures that work the best for you.

#### **ALTERNATIVE TREATMENT**

Alternative forms of management consist of not undergoing the body contouring surgery. These procedures may improve body contour but often leave visible scars. Risks and potential complications associated with alternative forms of treatment should be discussed with Dr. Lowe as well.

#### **RISKS OF BODY CONTOURING SURGERY**

With any type of activity there is inherent risk. An individual's choice to undergo a surgical procedure is based on the comparison of the risk to potential benefit. Although the majority of patients do not experience the following complications, you should discuss each of them with your plastic surgeon to make sure you understand the risks, potential complications, and consequences of body contouring.

**Bleeding** – It is possible, though unusual, that you may have problems with bleeding during or after surgery. Should postoperative bleeding occur, it may require emergency treatment to stop the bleeding or a trip back to the operating room. Certain body contouring procedures such as extended abdominoplasties (tummy tucks that goes around the back) or massive panniculectomies are more prone to bleeding. When a large amount of tissue is removed particularly when procedures are combined there may be a need for blood transfusion. Do not take any aspirin or anti-inflammatory medications for ten days before surgery, as this contributes to a greater risk of bleeding. Hypertension (high blood pressure) that is not under good medical control may cause bleeding during or after surgery. Accumulations of blood under the skin may delay healing and cause scarring.

**Fluid collections** – Fluid collections can form in the period following body contouring procedures. These collections are called seromas and may be prevented by the use of compression dressings or drains. If the patient develops a fluid collection it may require multiple tapping, medical treatment, a new drain, or a trip back to the operating room.

**Infection** – Infection is quite unusual after most body contouring surgery. Should an infection occur, additional treatment including antibiotics may be necessary. Infection can cause surgical wound to open and result in scarring. Infection is not uncommon in patients undergoing large pannus or skin removals.

**Skin Contour Irregularities-** Skin irregularities, bumps, and areas of stiffness usually occur after body contouring procedures. Deep contour and shape irregularities may occur which may be visible and palpable. One side of the wound may be different to the other. The scar may not be completely even or identical from one side to the other. Residual skin irregularities at the ends of the incisions or “dog ears” are always a possibility when there is excessive redundant skin. Most of these areas resolve with time but some irregularities may be permanent or require revision. External massage techniques may be helpful in some situations.

**Sutures-** Most surgical techniques use deep sutures. You may notice these sutures after your surgery. Sutures may spontaneously poke through the skin, become visible or produce irritation that requires removal.

**Skin Discoloration / Swelling-** Some bruising and swelling normally occurs following body contouring surgery. The skin in or near the surgical site can appear either lighter or darker than surrounding skin. Although uncommon, swelling and skin discoloration may persist for long periods of time and, in rare situations, may be permanent.

**Scarring** – Although good wound healing after a surgery is expected, abnormal scars may occur both within the skin and deeper tissues. Scars may be unattractive and of different color than surrounding skin. There is the possibility of visible marks from sutures. Additional treatments including surgery may be needed to treat scarring.

**Scar length** – The length of your scars with body contouring procedures is related to the area of redundancy. Limiting the scars will often limit the success of the surgery by accentuating other deformities. A good example of this is seen with abdominoplasty procedures. If redundancy is present in the flanks prior to a tummy tuck it will only be made worse by removing skin in the front. Sometimes this problem can be addressed with liposuction alone, but it may be better to extend the scar to the flanks to address significant tissue redundancy.

**Skin compromise-** Certain body contouring procedures that require significant undermining such as abdominoplasty or thigh lifts can be associated with separation of the wound. This wound separation may require local wound care, scar revision, special devices, or surgery. Wound separation may be the result

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of skin death or infection and certain areas are more prone to this problem than others (i.e. belly button, lower abdomen, and inner thighs). Liposuction can result in skin compromise but it is very rare. Smoking will compromise the skin so patients can not smoke for 2 months prior to surgery and at least one month after surgery. Cleanliness, time, patience, and compliance with specific instructions are key issues to successful recovery. Avoid the sun for 6 months after surgery.

**Delayed healing** – Wound disruption or delayed wound healing is possible. Some areas of the abdomen may not heal normally and may take a long time to heal. Skin compromise may require frequent dressing changes or further surgery to remove the non-healed tissue.

**Damage to deeper structures** – Deeper structures such as nerves, blood vessels, and muscles may be damaged during the course of surgery. The potential for this to occur varies with the type of body contouring procedure. Injury to deeper structures may be temporary or permanent. Liposuction is often associated with post operative pain or numbness which usually resolves within several months. Any procedure requiring a great deal of skin or soft tissue removal will result in numbness and pain.

**Allergic reactions** – In rare cases, local allergies to tape, suture material, or topical preparations have been reported. Systemic reactions which are more serious may occur to drugs and prescription medicines. Allergic reactions may require additional treatment.

**Asymmetry** – The human body is normally asymmetrical. There can be a variation from one side to the other in the results obtained body contouring. If a surgical scar is required it is unlikely to ever be completely symmetric.

**Surgical Wetting Solutions-** There is the possibility that fluid containing dilute local anesthetic drugs and epinephrine that is injected into fatty deposits to assist in surgery in body shaping that may contribute to fluid overload or systemic reaction to these medications. Additional treatment including hospitalization may be necessary.

**Fat Necrosis-** Fatty tissue found deep in the skin might die. This may produce areas of firmness within the skin. Additional surgery to remove areas of fat necrosis may be necessary. There is the possibility of contour irregularities in the skin that may result from fat necrosis

**Skin Sensitivity-** Itching, tenderness, or exaggerated responses to hot or cold temperatures may occur after surgery. Usually this resolve during healing, but in rare situations it may be chronic.

**Chronic pain** – Chronic pain may occur very infrequently after body contouring procedures.

**Numbness** – There is the potential for permanent numbness following body contouring procedures. The occurrence of this is not predictable. It is rare to have numbness past 6 months, but numbness may not totally resolve in some cases. As nerves recover they may become hypersensitive or even painful

**Unsatisfactory result** – There is the possibility of an unsatisfactory result from the body contouring procedure. The surgery may result in unacceptable visible or tactile deformities, loss of function, or structural mal-position. You may be disappointed that the results of surgery do not meet your expectations. Additional surgery may be necessary should the result be unsatisfactory.

**Long term effects** – It is important to remember to avoid sun exposure for 6 months after body contouring procedures. Sun tanning can result in tissue loss and scarring even when a bathing suit covers the area. Scars tend to fade with time but will be significantly harmed by sun exposure. Patients should try their best to lose as much weight as possible before surgery to maximize the result. Large weight

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gains after surgery will result in significant deformity in some cases. Future surgery or other treatments may be necessary to maintain the results of body contouring procedures.

**Functional alterations** – Changes may occur after a body contouring procedures that may limit a patient's function. Often tightening the abdominal wall may result in difficulty standing fully erect for a limited period of time. Patients may recovery at different rates following body contouring surgery, but the more surgery you have done the more difficult the recovery. Typically, patients are able to return to work 2 weeks after a tummy tuck and at 3-4 weeks following an extended abdominoplasty. Patients who are planning a future pregnancy should consider not undergoing certain body contouring procedures on the abdomen.

**Need for revision** – Certain body contouring procedures are more likely to require revision surgery. Patients with a great deal of tissue or skin excess often require a second operation at one year. It is only possible to remove and tighten tissue a certain amount on one occasion. Skin will often accommodate stretch over time and become redundant. Revision surgery is common in patients who have lost a lot of weight following gastric bypass or stapling. Patient's skin does not always retract well following liposuction procedures and redundancy may result requiring skin excision

**Recovery** - Most patients undergoing breast reduction or lift will require observation after surgery for pain control and observation. Patients may recover at different rates following surgery, but the larger the procedure the more difficult the recovery. Typically, patients who undergo body contouring surgery experience significant functional limitation. Patients usually return to work after 2-4 weeks of recovery. However, recovery may vary with the procedure and the individual patient. The best results can be obtained when patients wear breast compression for 3-4 weeks after surgery

**Surgical anesthesia** – Both local and general anesthesia involve risk. There is the possibility of complications, injury, and even death from all forms of surgical anesthesia or sedation. If you are over 45 years of age, have a known medical condition, or you are in any way concerned, a pre-operative evaluation from your primary care physician or cardiologist is recommended prior to surgery.

**Deep Venous Thrombosis, Cardiac and Pulmonary Complications-** Surgery, especially longer procedures, may be associated with the formation of, or increase in, blood clots in the venous system. Pulmonary complications may occur secondarily to both blood clots (pulmonary emboli), fat deposits (fat emboli) or partial collapse of the lungs after general anesthesia. Pulmonary and fat emboli can be life-threatening or fatal in some circumstances. Air travel, inactivity and other conditions may increase the incidence of blood clots traveling to the lungs causing a major blood clot that may result in death. It is important to discuss with your physician any past history of blood clots, swollen legs or the use of estrogen or birth control pills that may contribute to this condition. Cardiac complications are a risk with any surgery and anesthesia, even in patients without symptoms. Should any of these complications occur, you may require hospitalization and additional treatment. If you experience shortness of breath, chest pains, or unusual heart beats, seek medical attention immediately.

**Shock-** In rare circumstances, your surgical procedure can cause severe trauma, particularly when multiple or extensive procedures are performed. Although serious complications are infrequent, infections or excessive fluid loss can lead to severe illness and even death. If surgical shock occurs, hospitalization and additional treatment would be necessary.

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## **ADDITIONAL ADVISORIES**

**Long-Term Results-** Subsequent alterations in the appearance of your body may occur as the result of aging, sun exposure, weight loss, weight gain, pregnancy, menopause or other circumstances not related to your surgery.

**Metabolic Status of Massive Weight Loss Patients-** Your personal metabolic status of blood chemistry and protein levels may be abnormal following massive weight loss and surgical procedures to make a patient loose weight. Individuals with abnormalities may be a risk for serious medical and surgical complications, including delayed wound healing, infection or even in rare cases, death.

**Body-Piercing Procedures-** Individuals who currently wear body-piercing jewelry or are seeking to undergo body-piercing procedures must consider the possibility that an infection could develop anytime following this procedure. Treatment including antibiotics, hospitalization or additional surgery may be necessary.

**Female Patient Information-** It is important to inform your plastic surgeon if you use birth control pills, estrogen replacement, or if you suspect you may be pregnant. Many medications including antibiotics may neutralize the preventive effect of birth control pills, allowing for conception and pregnancy.

**Intimate Relations After Surgery-** Surgery involves coagulating of blood vessels and increased activity of any kind may open these vessels leading to a bleed, or hematoma. Increased activity that increased your pulse or heart rate may cause additional bruising, swelling, and the need for return to surgery and control bleeding. It is wise to refrain from sexual activity until your physician states it is safe.

**Medications-** There are many adverse reactions that occur as the result of taking over-the-counter, herbal, and/or prescription medications. Be sure to check with your physician about any drug interactions that may exist with medications that you are already taking. If you have an adverse reaction, stop the drugs immediately and call your plastic surgeon for further instructions. If the reaction is severe, go immediately to the nearest emergency room. When taking the prescribed pain medications after surgery, realize that they can affect your thought process and coordination. Do not drive, do not operate complex equipment, do not make any important decisions and do not drink any alcohol while taking these medications. Be sure to take your prescribed medication only as directed.

**Mental Health Disorders and Elective Surgery-** It is important that all patients seeking to undergo elective surgery have realistic expectations that focus on improvement rather than perfection. Complications or less than satisfactory results are sometimes unavoidable, may require additional surgery and often are stressful. Please openly discuss with your surgeon, prior to surgery, any history that you may have of significant emotional depression or mental health disorders. Although many individuals may benefit psychologically from the results of elective surgery, effects on mental health cannot be accurately predicted.

### **Smoking, Second-Hand Smoke Exposure, Nicotine Products (Patch, Gum, Nasal Spray)-**

Patients who are currently smoking, use tobacco products, or nicotine products (patch, gum, or nasal spray) are at a greater risk for significant surgical complications of skin dying, delayed healing, and additional scarring. Individuals exposed to second-hand smoke are also at potential risk for similar complications attributable to nicotine exposure. Additionally, smokers may have a significant negative effect on anesthesia and recovery from anesthesia, with coughing and possibly increased bleeding.

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Individuals who are not exposed to tobacco smoke or nicotine-containing products have a significantly lower risk of this type of complication. Please indicate your current status regarding these items below:

\_\_\_\_\_ I am a non-smoker and do not use nicotine products. I understand the risk of second-hand smoke exposure causing surgical complications.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am a smoker or use tobacco / nicotine products. I understand the risk of surgical complications due to smoking or use of nicotine products.

It is important to refrain from smoking at least 6 weeks before surgery and until your physician states it is safe to return, if desired.

**Post-bariatric patients:** It is highly recommended that you quit smoking before undergoing this procedure as it will adversely affect your outcome. Only under certain circumstances, clearly specified by your plastic surgeon, should this procedure be done on an individual who smokes.

### **ADDITIONAL SURGERY NECESSARY (Re-operations)**

There are many variable conditions that may influence the long-term result of surgery. Should complications occur, additional surgery or other treatments may be necessary. Secondary surgery may be necessary to obtain optimal results. Even though risks and complications occur infrequently, the risks cited are particularly associated with abdominoplasty. Other complications and risks can occur but are even more uncommon. The practice of medicine and surgery is not an exact science. Although good results are expected, there is no guarantee or warranty expressed or implied, on the results that may be obtained. In some situations, it may not be possible to achieve optimal results with a single surgical procedure.

### **PATIENT COMPLIANCE**

Follow all physician instructions carefully; this is essential for the success of your outcome. It is important that the surgical incisions are not subjected to excessive force, swelling, abrasion, or motion during the time of healing. Personal and vocational activity needs to be restricted. Protective dressings and drains should not be removed unless instructed by your plastic surgeon. Successful post-operative function depends on both surgery and subsequent care. Physical activity that increases your pulse or heart rate may cause bruising, swelling, fluid accumulation and the need for return to surgery. It is wise to refrain from intimate physical activities after surgery until your physician states it is safe. It is important that you participate in follow-up care, return for aftercare, and promote your recovery after surgery.

### **FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

The cost of surgery involves several charges for the services provided. The total includes fees charged by your surgeon, the cost of surgical supplies, anesthesia, laboratory tests, and possible outpatient hospital charges, depending on where the surgery is performed. Depending on whether the cost of surgery is covered by an insurance plan, you will be responsible for necessary co-payments, deductibles, and charges not covered. The fees charged for this procedure do not include any potential future costs for additional procedures that you elect to have or require in order to revise, optimize, or complete your outcome. Additional costs may occur should complications develop from the surgery. Secondary surgery or hospital day-surgery charges involved with revision surgery will also be your responsibility. **In signing the consent for this surgery/procedure, you acknowledge that you have been informed about its risk and consequences and accept responsibility for the clinical decisions that were made along with the financial costs of all future treatments.**

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### **HEALTH INSURANCE**

Most health insurance companies exclude coverage for cosmetic surgical operations such as abdominoplasty or any complications that might occur from surgery. Please carefully review your health insurance subscriber-information pamphlet or contact your insurance company for a detailed explanation of their policies for covering abdominoplasty procedures. **Most insurance plans exclude coverage for secondary or revisionary surgery.**

### **DISCLAIMER**

Informed-consent documents are used to communicate information about the proposed surgical treatment of a disease or condition along with disclosure of risks and alternative forms of treatment(s). This informed –consent process attempts to define principles of risk disclosure that should generally meet the needs of most patients in most circumstances.

However, informed consent documents should not be considered all inclusive in defining other methods of care and risks encountered. Your plastic surgeon may provide you with additional or different information which is based on all the facts in your particular case and the state of medical knowledge.

Informed-consent documents are not intended to define or serve as the standard of medical care. Standards of medical care are determined on the basis of all of the facts involved in an individual case and are subject to change as scientific knowledge and technology advance and as practice patterns evolve.

**It is important that you read the above information carefully and have all of your questions answered before signing the consent below.**

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## CONSENT FOR SURGERY/PROCEDURE or TREATMENT

1. I hereby authorize Dr. Lowe and such assistants as may be selected to perform the following procedure or treatment.

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I have received the following information sheet:

### INFORMED CONSENT FOR BODY CONTOURING SURGERY

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2. I recognize that during the course of the operations and medical treatment or anesthesia, unforeseen conditions may necessitate different procedures than those above. I, therefore, authorize the above physician and assistants or designees to perform such other procedures that are in the exercise of his or her professional judgment necessary and desirable. The authority granted under this paragraph shall include all conditions that require treatment and are not known to my physician at the time the procedure is begun.
3. I consent to the administration of such anesthetics considered necessary or advisable. I understand that all forms of anesthesia involve risk and the possibility of complications, injury, and sometimes death.
4. I acknowledge that no guarantee has been given by anyone as to the results that may be obtained.
5. I consent to the photographing or televising of the operation(s) or procedure(s) to be performed, including appropriate portions of my body, for medical, scientific or educational purposes, provided my identity is not revealed by the pictures.
6. For purposes of advancing medical education, I consent to the admittance of observers to the operating room.
7. I consent to the disposal of any tissue, medical devices or body parts which may be removed.
8. I authorize the release of my Social Security number to appropriate agencies for legal reporting and medical-device registration, if applicable.
9. IT HAS BEEN EXPLAINED TO ME IN A WAY THAT I UNDERSTAND:
  - A. The above treatment or procedure to be undertaken.
  - B. There may be alternative procedures or methods of treatment.
  - C. There are risks to the procedure or treatment proposed including those listed above.
  - D. I have read, understood, and have had the opportunity to ask questions concerning the above, as well as the Informed Consent Body Contouring Surgery information sheet.
  - E. I am satisfied with the explanation.

I CONSENT TO THE TREATMENT OR PROCEDURE AND THE ABOVE LISTED ITEMS (1-9).

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Patient or Person Authorized To Sign for Patient.

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Date

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Witness