

After Liposuction

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AFTER SURGERY?

There will be a mild to moderate amount of pain and discomfort associated with the surgery. This should be easily controlled with oral medications. Tylenol with codeine (or equivalent if allergy to codeine exists) is generally always sufficient for pain control.

The discomfort and pain should begin to decrease within 48 hours after surgery. A significant increase in pain after this period should prompt you to call the office.

You may notice some numbness in the area from which fat was removed. This is because the surgery often causes a temporary disruption of the small nerve fibers going through the fat layer to reach the skin surface. You should not be alarmed, as sensation will gradually return over several weeks. Some patients will normally experience prolonged numbness that may last for months. As the nerves start to heal, it is normal to experience some tingling in the area.

Bruising and swelling are to be expected after this surgery. These symptoms will peak 36 to 48 hours after surgery and will gradually subside over 10 to 14 days. To minimize the swelling you should sleep with your head elevated for a couple of weeks after surgery.

It is not unusual during the healing phase, to note some irregularities under the skin. These small bumps under the skin are present because your body is sending inflammatory cells to the area to get rid of residual damaged fat cells. For every fat cell that we remove during liposuction,

we injure a few more. This is a beneficial effect because your body will gradually resorb these injured cells over several weeks. Thus, although you will begin to notice significant changes soon after the surgery, your body should continue to slowly improve for up to 6 months after your procedure.

The treated area will often feel quite stiff while it is healing. Do not be alarmed. It will gradually soften up and return to normal over a period of several weeks, or, sometimes, months.

It is of utmost importance to tell Dr. Pearce ahead of time if you have ever been on Accutane, received radiation therapy to the treated area, taken steroids or immunosuppressive agents.

Immunosuppressed patients (HIV positive, chemotherapy, AIDS etc) and patients with certain autoimmune disorders may not be good candidates for this procedure as the risks of poor healing and infection leading to permanent scarring and poor aesthetic results may be much higher. It is mandatory that you inform Dr. Pearce if you have any of these conditions before surgery.

CALL THE OFFICE PROMPTLY IF YOU NOTICE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- you experience increased difficulties swallowing or breathing.
- development of a temperature elevation exceeding 100.4 degrees.
- a significant increase in pain after the first 48 hours following surgery, especially if there is an associated significant increase in swelling in the treated area.

If any of the above should occur after regular office hours, do not hesitate to reach us through the answering service. For whatever

reason, if you notice one of the above changes and cannot reach us at our office or through the answering service, present yourself to the emergency department for evaluation.

HOW DO I CARE FOR MYSELF AFTER SURGERY?

Make arrangements to have someone drive you to, and from, your surgery.

Having someone stay with you on at least the first night after your surgery is highly recommended.

Be sure to fill your prescriptions before your surgery since it means one less thing for you to worry about afterwards.

Arrive for your surgery in loose, comfortable clothing. Your top should button or zip rather than pull over your head.

Be sure to keep the small incisions, used for liposuction, clean and dry until your first post operative visit to the office. You may start to shower, beginning 2 days after your surgery.

Take the antibiotics and pain medication only as prescribed by the office.

Do not take any aspirin or any anti-inflammatory compounds for 2 weeks before and 2 weeks after your surgery unless you first discuss it with your surgeon.

If you are a smoker, you should not smoke for at least 2 weeks prior to surgery and 2 weeks after surgery. Smoking and chewing tobacco inhibit your circulation and can significantly compromise your surgical outcome.

After the surgery, you will be placed in a supportive elastic bandages or garment that is to be worn continuously, unless showering, for the first 7 to 10 days. Dr. Pearce will discuss how long to wear your compression garments at your post op visits. The sutures used to close the small incisions, may be either dissolvable or non-dissolvable. Dissolvable sutures will disappear on their own in 5 to 7 days. Non dissolvable sutures should be removed approximately 1 week after surgery.

You should do no vigorous exercise and should avoid any significant physical exertion for a minimum of 3 weeks after your surgery.

You should not participate in any contact sports until approved by your surgeon.

Do not rub, wash or massage your neck until after you are examined and told it is all right to do so.

RECOVERY TIMETABLE

Approximate recovery after liposuction is as follows:
DAY 1 Return home, some bruising and mild swelling. Wear supportive elastic garment or bandages at all times for the first 7 to 10 days, unless showering.

DAY 1-2 Aching, throbbing

DAYS 2 May shower.

WEEKS 4 to 8: Wear elastic garment at night only. Swelling much improved. However if you feel like wearing your garment for a longer period of time this can help with your final results.

6 MONTHS Enjoy your final result.

REMEMBER: if you have any concerns or questions, please contact our office any time. Our office should be a source of information and reassurance throughout the entire period from the time of your first consultation and continuing after your surgery.

