

IS THE FAT REALLY GONE FOREVER?

A consultation is key to learning more about the benefits and limitations of liposuction, but asking the experts a few burning questions doesn't hurt.

Do I have too much fat for liposuction?

"The ideal candidate is within 20 percent of his or her ideal weight and has good skin tone and limited amounts of fat," advises Dr. Saad. "Those with lax skin or stretch marks may not respond well because their skin may not recoil when the fat is removed." Eugene, OR plastic surgeon Mark Jewell, MD cautions: "Patients with large bellies, where there is limited fat under the skin and large amounts of fat inside the abdomen, cannot achieve a good outcome through liposuction."

Can I lipo more than one body part at a time?

"It's actually uncommon to suction just one area at a time," says Dr. Gingrass. "If a patient would benefit from liposuction of several areas, we would typically do them all in the same operation." In some cases it may be prudent to perform larger combinations of procedures in stages in order to maximize results.

Will my fat return after liposuction?

"We remove the majority of the fat cells," says Dr. Garcia, "but we don't remove all of the fat because we want to leave

a nice, smooth layer there. So, if the patient gains weight, the fat cells that were left can grow in size."

Is there a limit to how much fat you can take?

"There isn't an exact limit," says Dr. Gingrass, "but the American Society of Plastic Surgeons advises that risks significantly increase when more than 11 pounds are removed in one sitting. But, every situation is different. In cases where more fat is removed or combined with other surgical procedures, it may be best that the patient is observed overnight in a proper postoperative facility."

DOCTOR, IS THIS NORMAL?

These six side effects typically accompany a liposuction procedure. Here's what to expect:

SCARS Because liposuction incisions are so small, they are rarely visible to someone other than the patient.

SWELLING AND BRUISING The lower extremities are more susceptible to fluid retention. Swelling decreases rapidly; however, bruising may persist for up to three weeks.

HYPERPIGMENTATION Occasionally, there may be some darkness in the skin where lipo has been performed. "This is caused by hemosiderin, a pigment produced when red blood cells break down," says Dr. Jewell. "This may take a few months to go away."

HYPERSENSITIVITY Expect to feel slight discomfort. Any severe pain is reason to immediately call your doctor.

UNEVEN APPEARANCE Contour irregularities can occur as remaining fat settles. Massage, topical creams and external ultrasound may help. "I have my patients undergo a lymphatic drainage massage after one week, then at 10 days, and again after that," advises Dr. Saad.

NUMBNESS This temporary side effect is normal and results from disturbing the small nerve fibers below the skin. Only in very rare instances is numbness permanent.

SHAPING A NEW, BEAUTIFUL BUTT

More than likely, the popularity of the peach emoji shape is thanks to the Brazilian Butt Lift (BBL). Utilizing harvested fat taken from the body during liposuction, fat transfer is performed and placed back into the derrière to create a rounder, fuller shape. "It has been an key part of my Mommy Makeover procedure for more than a decade," says Shreveport, LA plastic surgeon Simeon Wall Jr, MD. "I take the SAFELipo fat, and using Expansion Vibration Lipofilling (EVL), place it into the part of the buttock that gives it a rounder, fuller, more athletic appearance. Most of my patients want the smallest waist possible with a higher, tighter buttock and a proportional silhouette."

While the BBL remains one of the most popular procedures, it also comes with risks. If performed incorrectly, injecting fat into the buttock can lead to vital problems, including a fat embolism. If fat enters the bloodstream, it can block the lungs, leading to death.

La Jolla, CA plastic surgeon Robert Singer, MD says more patients are becoming aware of the risks: "While extensive research into making the procedure safer is being carried out, patients should be aware of potential complications—not only the benefits—before undergoing this, as well as any procedure." As a result, doctors are utilizing BBL alternatives like thread lifts; radio-frequency treatments; Emsculpt muscle toning, and Sculptra Aesthetic injections (thread lifts and Sculptra Aesthetic have not been FDA-approved for this use) to temporarily plump the butt. Dr. Jewell stresses that these new modalities have not yet been proven: "The clinical outcomes have never been studied with regards to long-term aesthetics, safety or patient satisfaction."

FAT BLASTERS TO THE RESCUE

How They Work All protocols—cold, heat, ultrasound, radio frequency (RF) and injections—work to disrupt fat cells and expel them from the body through its own metabolic system.

What to Expect Immediate death of the fat cells doesn't necessarily mean immediate results because the actual death cycle of the cell can sometimes take several months. In other words, "good things come to those who wait."

Post-Treatment Care Most noninvasive body-sculpting procedures are typically downtime-free with minimal recovery. "You can easily lose three to four inches, but you have to maintain a stable weight," says Dr. Downie.

Longevity "Once the fat cells are gone, they do not grow back, and therefore they can no longer shrink and expand with weight gain or loss," says New York plastic surgeon David Rapaport, MD.

THE FAT FREEZER

Brand Name CoolSculpting

Energy Used Controlled cooling

How It Works Different-size applicators are used to target unwanted fat cells and freeze them, causing them to crystalize. Over a period of two months, the cells die, stimulating the immune system to remove them. "The crystallized fat cells are no longer viable. They undergo a death process called apoptosis and are slowly eliminated from the body through the natural metabolic process," says Dr. Rapaport. "Of patients with visible fatty bulges, about 97 percent see an average fat reduction of 20-25 percent in treated areas."

Treatment Areas The abdomen, flanks, under the neck (double chin), back, bra area, thighs, arms, and under the buttocks (the banana roll)

Procedure Time 35-60 minutes

Average Treatment Cost \$1,000-\$2,000 per area

THE FAT MELTERS

Brand Name SculpSure

Energy Used Light-based laser

How It Works Applicators emit lasers through the skin (without affecting it) to heat up the fat cells and destroy them.

Treatment Areas The abdomen, flanks, back, thighs, arms and under the neck (double chin)

Procedure Time 25 minutes

Brand Names Exilis Elite and Vanquish ME

Energy Used Radio frequency

How It Works Short, intense pulses deliver heat through the skin to break up fat and tighten and create new collagen.

Treatment Areas The abdomen, flanks, back, bra area, thighs, arms and under the buttocks

Procedure Time 30 minutes

Brand Names Liposonix, Ultrashape and TruSculpt 3D

Energy Used Ultrasound

How It Works Ultrasound waves break fat into small clusters so it is more easily removed.

Treatment Areas The flanks, abdomen, waist, arms and thighs

Procedure Time 30-60 minutes

Average Treatment Cost \$1,000-\$2,000 per area



THE FAT DISSOLVER

Brand Name Kybella

How It Works Injections of deoxycholic acid—a naturally occurring molecule in the body that aids in the breakdown and absorption of fat—are used for improving the appearance of a double chin. “It works almost immediately in that it literally digests the fat it comes in contact with,” says Vero Beach, FL plastic surgeon Alan Durkin, MD. “The cells are then cleared out naturally by the immune system.” Typically, 20-30 injections are done per session. There may be prolonged swelling and an inflammatory reaction, and multiple treatment sessions may be needed for optimal results.

Treatment Area Under the neck; off-label uses include the inner thighs, above the knees and in the jowls

Procedure Time 35-60 minutes

Longevity Results are not totally predictable, but Dr. Durkin says, “there is strong evidence to suggest that the effect is permanent.”

Average Treatment Cost \$1,200-\$1,500 per session

THE MUSCLE BUILDER

Brand Name: Emsculpt

Energy Used High-intensity electromagnetic energy

How It Works During each session, an applicator is placed over the abdomen, love handles or butt, and electromagnetic energy induces tiny contractions to the nearby muscles. “We have medical devices that can freeze and melt away unwanted fat, but the muscle underneath is always left untouched,” says Delray Beach, FL dermatologist Dr. Janet Allenby. “Emsculpt is a game changer because it tones, tightens and strengthens the muscle underneath, which helps sculpt the area. I use it as an adjunct to the fat reduction treatments I do.”

Treatment Areas The abdomen and buttocks

Procedure Time Four 30-minute sessions scheduled two to three days apart

Longevity “This treatment provides a jump-start to get you to a higher level of your own body goals than what you can achieve on your own, but I encourage my patients to maintain a healthy lifestyle to maintain maximal results,” says Dr. Allenby.

Average Treatment Cost \$1,000 per session, per treated area



THE CELLULITE SMOOTHERS

All cellulite treatments have one goal in common: to minimize the appearance of dimpled skin for a smoother, firmer look. “Because women continue to develop cellulite as they age, I recommend, no matter which cellulite treatment you choose, a follow-up treatment at six to 12 months,” says West Palm Beach, FL dermatologist Kenneth R. Beer, MD.

Cellfina

How It Works The minimally invasive treatment uses a small, motor-driven surgical blade to break up attachments to the overlying skin, releasing the divots seen as cellulite.

What to Expect Results have been clinically proven to last three years—with doctors predicting most dimples will never return.

Cellulaze

How It Works A laser is inserted to melt fat and break up the attachments to the skin while increasing collagen production.

What to Expect Bruising, minor pain and the possibility of burns may occur. Results can be seen in the first few months, but will improve over one year.

VelaShape III and VelaSmooth

How They Work They target cellulite using a mix of radio frequency and suction massage.

What to Expect Diminished cellulite in the treated areas and the look of firmer, tighter skin. Results may be temporary.

ThermiTight and ThermiSmooth

How They Work These treatment breaks down fibrous fat and stimulates collagen production using radio-frequency energy.

What to Expect A series of four to six treatments can noticeably improve the look of cellulite. Result may be temporary.

BodyFX

How It Works A combination of modalities including RF, deep tissue heating, suction and negative pressure work synergistically to destroy fatty adipose tissue and tighten skin.

What to Expect Results can be seen in four to six weeks, although three to four treatments may be needed. Las Vegas plastic surgeon Christopher Khorsandi, MD adds, “You can see temporary improvement with radio frequency alone, but for durable, lasting results, you need to target the cells and destroy the adipose tissue, which this treatment does.”

“We can freeze and melt away unwanted fat.”

—DR. JANET ALLENBY

▼ AVERAGE TREATMENT COST

\$2,400

B + A

BODY CONTOURING GALLERY

From fat melters and cellulite treatments to targeted muscle building, there are now more ways than ever to sculpt, slenderize and smooth almost any part of the body.



Bothered by what she called her "double chin," this 26-year-old patient sought Windermere, FL oculoplastic surgeon Keshini C. Parbhu, MD for two treatments of Kybella, spaced one month apart.



To reduce this 48-year-old patient's upper arm fat, Greenwich, CT dermatologist Mitchell J. Ross, MD performed a CoolSculpting treatment on each arm. The "after" photo is shown three months post-treatment.



Desiring a slimmer, trimmer abdomen without going under the knife, this 32-year-old patient went to Newport Beach, CA plastic surgeon Sanjay Grover, MD for a CoolSculpting treatment on her stomach.



This 34-year-old patient visited New York dermatologist Bruce E. Katz, MD for four Emsculpt treatments completed over the course of two weeks. The result shows a tightened, toned tummy and an hourglass shape.



This 51-year-old patient wanted to enhance her buttocks without surgery. Delray Beach, FL dermatologist Dr. Janet Allenby performed four Emsculpt treatments to give the backside a lifted, fuller shape.



This 50-year-old patient maintained a healthy, active lifestyle, but still had cellulite she wanted to get rid of. Chicago plastic surgeon Julius W. Few, MD performed one Cellfina treatment on the buttocks and thighs.



Paradise Valley, AZ dermatologist Susan Van Dyke, MD performed a Cellfina treatment on this 38-year-old patient who was concerned with dimples on her buttocks and thighs.