

## Liposuction

Diet and exercise are good approaches to maintaining a healthy weight. But if your efforts don't seem to make a dent on unwanted bulges in your body, you might consider an alternative such as liposuction. Liposuction is a procedure that permanently removes fat from your body, whether it's excess fat around the tummy, under the chin and neck, or on your thighs. It's sometimes known as "body sculpting" because it can reshape areas of your body that seem out of proportion.

### WHAT CAN LIPOSUCTION DO FOR ME?

Liposuction can help sculpt your body by removing fat from specific areas. The procedure is intended to treat pockets of fat, not to remove fat from large, overall areas. Liposuction is not a treatment for obesity. It does not usually improve rippling on the skin surface, and is not a way to treat cellulite. You could see results immediately following the procedure, and the results are permanent.

Liposuction may be performed on multiple areas of the body during a single procedure. Liposuction is usually effective on areas such as the cheeks, jowls, neck, upper arms, breast or chest area, back, abdomen, waist, hips, buttocks, inner and outer thighs, inner knee, calves, and ankles.

### AM I A GOOD CANDIDATE?

Liposuction works best on people with good skin tone who have small pockets of excess fat in certain areas. Age is not a major consideration, but older people have less elasticity in their skin, and may not achieve the same results as younger people.

In determining whether you're a good candidate for liposuction, your surgeon will consider your current weight and whether you plan to lose or gain weight in the future. Not everyone will achieve the same results from liposuction. Liposuction isn't a substitute for healthy weight loss. People who are considered obese, have unrealistic expectations about their weight, have poor skin tone, or have medical problems may not be good candidates for liposuction.

### WHAT IS THE TREATMENT LIKE?

A small, hollow tube called a cannula is inserted into your body through one or more tiny incisions near the area to be treated. The incisions, which are typically less than ¼ inch each, are placed in inconspicuous areas of your body. The tube is connected to a vacuum pressure unit, and as the surgeon guides the plastic tubing, the unit suctions out the unwanted fat.

The length of the procedure varies with the amount of fat and the number of areas to be treated. Treatments generally last two to four hours, and you can usually go home the same day.

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### WHAT CAN I EXPECT BEFORE AND AFTER TREATMENT?

#### Before your treatment

You'll begin with a consultation with a surgeon, who will ask you about your health goals as well as evaluate your skin tone, the size and location of your fat deposits, and your general health. Together, you'll discuss your different options and decide what treatments are right for you.

If you're scheduled for liposuction, you'll be asked to stop smoking and to stop using nicotine patches and gum. You may also be asked to stop taking certain medications, including some that may increase bleeding. Your surgeon will provide you with complete instructions on how you should prepare for your surgery.

Right before your surgery, you'll receive medications for your comfort, and a physician will give you anesthesia. Depending on your unique needs, you may decide on local anesthesia, intravenous sedation, an epidural block, or general anesthesia.

A typical liposuction procedure can take one to two hours. The length of the procedure varies greatly depending on the number of areas to be treated and the technique to be used. Your surgeon can give you a better idea of how long your procedure will take.

The procedure is usually performed on an outpatient basis at our hospital or surgical center. We recommend that you make arrangements for someone to drive you home after your treatment is complete.

#### After your treatment

Right after your surgery, you'll be moved to a recovery room where we'll monitor you closely. A small tube may be inserted beneath your skin to help prevent fluid buildup. An abdominal binder or compression garment will be placed after your procedure.

You may experience some discomfort, but we'll work with you to relieve pain and help you feel as comfortable as possible. Your medical care team may place an elastic bandage, or especially designed garment over the treated area. Your surgeon will tell you how to remove the dressings or abdominal binder for showers and will tell you when you can remove them for good.

Everyone's recovery is different. The day after your procedure, your care team may tell you to move around to get your blood circulating. You may also be required to refrain from taking certain medications while you recover. You can expect some swelling and bruising, which is normal. The swelling will begin to go away about a week after surgery. Bruising can last three weeks or longer, and numbness may last several weeks. Your stitches are absorbable and do not need to be removed. While you may be able to return to work in a few days, it may be one to two weeks before you can get back to your full normal routine. The extent of your surgery will determine the length of your recovery.

### ARE THERE ANY RISKS?

As with any surgery, there are risks associated with liposuction. They include bleeding, infection, scars, asymmetry, rippling of the skin, and temporary loss of skin sensation. At Kaiser Permanente, we believe you should fully understand all that's involved in your surgery and have realistic expectations. Your surgeon will take the time you need to discuss the potential risks as well as postoperative care.