

# Important Information about Tumescent Liposuction©

**Risks of Liposuction Surgery:** Any surgery involves the risk of infection, bleeding, scarring or serious injury, however tumescent liposuction has an amazingly good safety record. One of the reasons that tumescent liposuction is so safe is that neither general anesthesia nor significant IV sedation is required. A recent survey involving over 15,000 patients who had tumescent liposuction without general anesthesia revealed no serious complications, no serious infection, no hospitalizations, no blood transfusions, and no deaths. The greatest risks of liposuction are those associated with general anesthesia. By eliminating general anesthesia, the risks of liposuction are dramatically reduced. Patients can minimize the risk of surgical complications by not taking medications or over-the-counter preparations that might adversely affect the surgery. Patients should inform the surgeon of any medications being taken either regularly, or occasionally, including herbal remedies and dietary supplements.

**Risk of Irregularities of the Skin:** Tumescent liposuction using microcannulas is the least likely to cause any significant or noticeable post-surgical irregularities of the skin. By magnifying the fatty compartment, the tumescent technique permits more accurate removal of fat, with greater assurance that the liposuction cannula will not inadvertently approach too near the undersurface of the skin and thereby cause irregularities. Thus the tumescent technique helps to minimize the risk of post-surgical irregularities or rippling of the skin. Liposuction might improve pre-existing irregularities of the skin such as dimpling or cellulite, but prospective patients should not assume that there will be significant improvement. It is unrealistic to expect perfectly smooth skin. Patients should expect that their skin will have approximately the same degree of dimpling and irregularities as existed before tumescent liposuction surgery. After tumescent liposuction the skin texture should be within normal limits. A casual observer should not notice any evidence of surgical irregularities of the skin. However, it is possible that a noticeable irregularity of skin may result. If an irregularity occurs, it may require a corrective procedure for which there will be a fee to cover the operating room and nursing staff expenses. Because skin tends to lose some of its elasticity with increasing age and with cumulative sun exposure, older patients might notice some subtle increase fine wrinkles in areas such as the upper abdomen after liposuction.

**Risk of Scarring of the Skin:** Incisions for liposuction may result in scarring. Tiny (1 to 2 millimeter) round holes in the skin, called adits, are used for inserting the cannulas through the skin and into the fat. Typically, when adits heal they become virtually invisible. Although you may be able to find them upon close examination, most other people would not be able to see them. Some patients may experience temporary hyper-pigmentation (darkening) that usually fades after several months. Some patients may have a genetic predisposition for persistent discoloration at incision sites. Any one who has previously experienced hyper-pigmentation or hypo-pigmentation (pale or light colored scars) of the skin in the past might expect to also experience it with liposuction adits or incisions. Certain areas of the body, such as the back or upper flanks, may be more likely to have pigmentation changes.

**Cellulite:** Liposuction of the thighs, while improving the silhouette, does not necessarily eliminate the subtle "puckering" of the skin often called "cellulite". Cellulite results from the pull of fibrous tissue that connects skin to underlying muscle. While tumescent liposuction may reduce the degree of cellulite, it is unlikely to eliminate it. Liposuction should not worsen cellulite.

**Smoothness of Results:** Liposuction some produce some irregularities of the skin which can be visible in certain conditions of lighting. In general the smoothness of the skin is much improved after microcannular liposuction. These are usually rather subtle, and imperceptible to the casual observer. It reasonable to expect significant improvement, but the results are rarely perfect.

**Obesity & Liposuction:** Liposuction is not an appropriate treatment for obesity. Liposuction is not a substitute for a prudent diet, good nutrition, and regular exercise. Obese patients may be good candidates for limited liposuction if their goal is simply to improve the shape of certain limited areas of the body. Obesity is associated with an increased risk of surgical complications.

**Postoperative Healing:** Normal healing after tumescent liposuction involves a limited but definite degree of soreness, swelling, bruising, itching and lumpy firmness. A temporary mild numbness, itching or burning of the skin may persist for 2 to 10 months. Most patients can actually see some improvement of their silhouette within one week after surgery. However, because of the slow resolution of post-surgical swelling, the ultimate results following liposuction usually require 12 to 20 weeks to be achieved.

**Realistic Expectations:** Although the results of liposuction are often quite spectacular, it is not realistic to expect perfection. It is impossible to guarantee the precise amount of improvement that will result from liposuction.

Patients should not have unrealistic expectations. Although patients can usually expect to achieve at least a 50% improvement, it is unreasonable to expect 95% improvement or near perfection. For the perfectionist, or for liposuction of a very large area, maximum improvement may require a second procedure for which there would be an additional fee.

**Patients who would be satisfied with a 50% improvement would be reasonably good candidates for liposuction. The "50% improvement" is intentionally a vague measure. It indicates a definite perceptible improvement, but something short of perfection. If a 50% improvement would make a patient happy, then it is likely that these expectations will be met. Our patients generally achieve more than a 50% improvement.**

**Longevity of Results:** The fat cells that are removed by liposuction do not grow back. If the patient later gains or loses weight, the change tends to be distributed proportionately over the entire body. For the best results the patient's post-op weight should be less than the pre-op weight. Although one can expect some changes with aging, provided that the patient does not gain large amounts of weight, the patient's new, more pleasing silhouette is relatively permanent.