Liposuction
What to expect and how to prepare

This handout explains what to expect, how to prepare, and how to plan for your recovery after liposuction.

Liposuction changes your body shape by removing excess fat. During surgery, your surgeon will remove fat from areas such as your chin, thighs, abdomen, and knees.

How to Prepare

- For 1 week before surgery, do not take any aspirin or other products that affect blood clotting. Two of these are ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) and naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn). See the handout “Medicines to Avoid Before Surgery.”
- Do not shave any part of your body that you do not already shave every day. If you normally shave near your surgical site, do not shave that area for 2 days (48 hours) before your surgery.

24 Hours Before Surgery

- Take 2 showers: Take 1 shower the night before, and a 2nd shower the morning of your surgery. Use the antibacterial soap your nurse gave you to wash your body. Do not use the antibacterial soap on your face and hair. (See directions that came with the soap.) Use your own soap and shampoo on your face and hair. Use clean towels to dry off, and put on clean clothing.
- Arrival time: A staff person from the pre-surgery clinic will call you by 5 p.m. the night before your surgery. If you are having surgery on a Monday, they will call you the Friday before. If you do not hear from them by 5 p.m., please call 206.598.6334.

Talk with your provider if you have any questions about how to prepare for liposuction.
The staff person will tell you when to come to the hospital and will remind you how to prepare for your surgery. If you have questions, they may forward your call to a nurse in the pre-surgery clinic or ask you to call your surgeon’s nurse.

**Day of Surgery**

- **Heating blanket:** At the hospital, we will cover you with a heating blanket to warm your body while you wait to go into the operating room. This helps lower your risk of infection. Please ask for a heating blanket if you do not receive one.

**After Surgery**

**Precautions**

Medicine given during and after your surgery will affect you. For 24 hours after your surgery do **not**:

- Drive, or travel alone
- Use machinery
- Drink alcohol
- Sign any legal papers or make important decisions
- Be responsible for the care of another person

**Skin Punctures**

- You will have small skin punctures where the suction device is passed beneath your skin. Each one may be closed with a small stitch that will dissolve on its own. The punctures will be covered by strips of white tape, gauze, and a clear dressing (bandage).

- You may wish to buy a compression garment for the area that you are having treated. A compression garment is easy to put on and take off. Wear this garment day and night for 1 month after your surgery. This is optional unless your surgeon specifically asks you to buy and wear one.

Compression garments can be found at a pharmacy, medical supply store, lingerie department, or online. Search for “post-surgical garments.”

**Shower**

- You may shower 48 hours after your surgery.
- Do not take a bath, sit in a hot tub, or go swimming until your drainage stops and your skin punctures are fully healed.
Pain Control
You can expect to have some discomfort after surgery, even if you use the pain medicine you received. If you are still very uncomfortable and you have used this medicine, please call the clinic and ask to talk with a nurse.

Return to Work
Return to work when you are comfortable doing so. Most people take 1 to 2 weeks off to recover after this surgery.

Healing and Drainage
- Some drainage is normal. Let the drainage continue, and place gauze or a panty liner over the area to protect your clothing.
- Some women have fat that is removed by liposuction injected into one or both of their breasts. If you have this done:
  - Your nipple(s) and breast(s) may feel numb for 6 to 8 weeks or longer.
  - Your breast tissue may be bruised. This bruising might turn to liquid and drain out of the incision beneath your breast(s).

When to Call
Call the clinic or your doctor if you have:
- Bleeding or drainage that soaks your dressing
- A fever higher than 100.5°F (38°C)
- Shaking and chills
- Any sign of infection in your incision:
  - Redness
  - Increasing pain
  - Swelling
  - Bad-smelling drainage
  - A change in the type or amount of drainage
- Nausea or vomiting, or both
- Concerns that cannot wait until your follow-up visit

Questions?
Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.
Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call the Center for Reconstructive Surgery at 206.598.1217 and press 8.
After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206.598.6190 and ask for the resident on call for your surgeon to be paged.