

PLASTIC SURGERY

Stubborn fat, begone!

If you have pockets of fat that refuse to budge despite exercise or dieting, liposuction could be the answer. It can be done either surgically or with new, non-surgical methods.



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Best used as a way to sculpt the body, liposuction is popular with those looking to remove localised pockets of fat from the hips, belly, thighs, buttocks or even the face. Contrary to common perception, it is not a weight loss tool; rather, it works best as a 'finishing touch' for those who are close to their target weight.

Because it is a surgical procedure, you must be in good health, not smoke, have firm and elastic skin and be within 30% of your ideal weight. It is not recommended for those with health issues such as heart disease, diabetes or a weak immune system.

What to expect

Smaller volume liposuction (under two litres of fat) is typically performed as outpatient day surgery. However, for larger volumes, Ministry of Health guidelines require that this be done as an in-patient procedure in a hospital. Your doctor will mark out the areas to be treated prior to the procedure.

You will be given anaesthesia to either make you sleep or to numb the areas to be treated. During the procedure, thin cannulae or tubes are inserted through small cuts in the skin to



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suction away fat cells in a targeted manner. After treatment, you will need to wear a compression garment for up to two months after surgery to reduce the post-operative swelling and bruising. Most people return to work in about a week and return to normal activities in two weeks, but this depends on the extent of the liposuction. Some bruising is to be expected in the early post-operative period, but resolves over a couple of weeks. Swelling will take about eight weeks to resolve.

Liposuction is generally safe but, as with any surgery, there are some risks. These include contour irregularities, skin pigmentation and sensory disturbance. Rarely, more significant complications can occur, such as deep vein thrombosis (blood clots), fat embolism, infection, and damage to the skin, nerves, blood vessels, muscles or organs.

After liposuction, it is important to maintain the results with a continued regimen of exercise and a healthy diet. Although liposuction permanently removes fat cells, it is not possible to remove all of them, so you can still gain weight and fat deposits can still recur. It is also important to note that liposuction cannot remove cellulite.

Non-surgical lipocontouring

For those keen to enjoy the effects of liposuction minus the negative aspects of surgery, CoolSculpting is a non-surgical option. It works by freezing the fat in the targeted area.

The technology delivers precisely controlled cooling to fat cells underneath the skin, freezing them so that they crystallise and die. Over time, the body naturally processes the dead fat cells and flushes them out. The highly targeted procedure does not damage the skin or surrounding tissue. Treatment can be individualised based on your specific goals, and can be used to sculpt areas such as the tummy, 'love handles', thighs, chin and upper arms. The length and number of sessions depend on the number of areas being treated, and can range from 35–60 minutes.

During the treatment, you will feel temporary intense cold in the areas that are being treated, but the sensation will dissipate after a few minutes. With some applicators, there is a slight sucking sensation. While treatment is going on, you can read, watch videos, work or take a nap. When the treatment is finished, you may experience mild tingling that can be relieved by massaging the affected area for several minutes. You can return to normal activities immediately afterwards.

Some of the advantages of CoolSculpting is that — unlike surgery — it doesn't require incisions, anaesthesia or any downtime. It is best for those who cannot take the time off for surgery or who wish to avoid surgery altogether. Results of CoolSculpting will take several weeks to become visible. [🔗](#)

