

What to Expect on the Day of Tumescent Liposuction

After you have signed your surgical-consent forms, you will change into a surgical gown. The admission interview/questionnaire will be completed by the RN. In the operating room the pre-operative photographs will be taken and finally the areas on your body to be treated with liposuction are marked with a felt-tip pen.

For safety purposes we routinely place an intravenous (IV) access in your arm; it consists of a small plastic IV tube with a rubber stopper on the outside through which medication can be injected if needed. A blood pressure cuff is placed on your opposite arm, and cardiac monitor leads are placed on your chest. Next, using the smallest needles available, the doctor or the nurse will anesthetize the skin at sites through which the longer needles or cannulas will be inserted to anesthetize the subcutaneous fat. Patients usually experience a slight pricking sensation as the skin becomes "numb".

A large volume of dilute tumescent anesthetic solution is carefully and gently injected into the targeted fat. Once an area has been well infiltrated with the anesthetic solution, the fat is usually completely numb. The infiltration of the local anesthetic is a slow careful process that can take as long to complete as the liposuction itself.

Experience has shown that giving a sedative by mouth permits better local anesthesia than when intravenous sedatives are used. This is because an alert patient is more capable of detecting subtle areas of incomplete anesthesia. A patient who is too sedated might easily ignore an incompletely anesthetized area, and then feel more discomfort later during liposuction. Therefore avoiding excessive sedation actually maximizes patient comfort during liposuction.

Liposuction is accomplished through tiny (1 to 2 millimeter) round holes in the skin, called adits. The adits, which are made in the skin with 1 to 2 mm biopsy punches, are so small that they need not be closed with stitches. After surgery adits remain open for 2 to 5 days and facilitate the post-operative drainage of residual blood-tinged anesthetic solution.

After completing liposuction, absorbent pads are placed over the adits. Finally, after the Tumescent Liposuction Compression Garments are pulled on, and the IV access is discontinued, you are ready to get up and go home. Because of residual local anesthesia, it is several hours after completing the liposuction before any significant soreness begins.

The tumescent technique minimizes post-operative discomfort. Because the residual local anesthesia lasts for over 18 to 24 hours, plain Tylenol is usually sufficient to treat post-operative discomfort. With the Tumescent Technique there is rarely any post-surgical nausea, or the unpleasant feeling of a "hang-over" associated with general anesthesia.

Transportation Home after Liposuction

Patients are not permitted to drive themselves home after liposuction. Although most patients feel well enough to drive a car immediately after surgery, you must not do so because the large amounts of local anesthesia may cause some drowsiness.