

Liposuction 101: Myths and Facts

Is liposuction really a “miracle cure” for obesity? If you’re overweight, can you have liposuction and then go back to eating all the fattening foods you want? What about exercise – you’ll never have to do that again, right?

Alas, these and many other myths about liposuction have made their way around the world. [Liposuction](#) is a very common surgery that has been performed safely for more than forty years – but make no mistake, it IS a surgery, and as such, should be taken seriously. You can maximize your likelihood of having a successful liposuction by doing plenty of homework beforehand, including understanding exactly what liposuction is (and isn’t) and selecting the right board-certified plastic surgeon to do the work you want.

Myth: Liposuction involves “sucking out” fat from around the middle of the body.

Fact: Liposuction is a good option for patients who have been unable to remove fat from specific areas of their bodies through normal exercise and healthy diet. It removes unwanted fat from target areas (that typically include the chin, cheeks, neck, arms, legs, abdomen, hips, thighs, buttocks, knees, calves or ankles), leaving minimal scars approximately 1¼ cm long. It’s also used for facial contouring.

A [board-certified plastic surgeon](#) may perform liposuction using any of the following techniques:

- Wet liposuction: Targeted fat cells are infused with a solution of saline, a vasoconstrictor (such as epinephrine) to limit blood loss and the topical anesthetic lidocaine. This solution makes fat cells easier to remove with a suction tube. In wet liposuction, the amount of the solution injected is less than the amount of fat removed.
- Super-wet liposuction: As its name implies, this technique uses more solution – approximately equal to the amount of fat being removed.
- Tumescent liposuction: This is by far the most commonly used technique, in which the surgeon infuses two to three times more saline than the amount of fat to be removed.
- Ultrasonic-assisted liposuction (UAL) uses high-frequency sound waves to energize and liquefy fat cells, which are then suctioned out using less pressure than traditional liposuction.
- Laser-assisted liposuction uses focused cold energy to emulsify fat cells, leaving the cell membranes unharmed.
- Laser lipolysis is a newer technique that is routinely performed in South America and Europe. Similar to the tumescent technique, this method uses an optic laser to emulsify up to 500 ml of fat, which is then reabsorbed by the body.

Myth: Liposuction is an effective, permanent weight-loss substitute for healthy diet and exercise.

Fact: While it does remove excess fat, liposuction may not impact body weight as drastically as the patient might expect. There is a limit, after all, to how much fat can be removed surgically from the body. Because some fat cells are left intact, these can – and will – increase if a patient gains weight, especially within a short period of time. Liposuction is only “permanent” as long as it is complemented by a doctor-approved regimen of healthy exercise and diet.

Myth: Liposuction is quick and easy.

Fact: It’s true that liposuction has been refined over the decades into a minimal-risk, outpatient procedure. Still, any patient who considers liposuction an “easy fix” should be made aware of the after-effects of bruising, swelling, numbness, soreness or burning sensations, as well as (rare but potentially serious) risks such as infection, changes in skin color or texture and excessive loss of blood or fluids. Patients should expect to return to regular daily activities after one to two weeks, resuming strenuous activity after about four weeks. Final results may sometimes take as long as six months to be apparent.

Myth: Anyone can perform liposuction.

Fact: Many general practitioners, beauty spas and other non-specialists do offer liposuction, often advertising bargain prices and quick results. But only a board-certified specialist in aesthetic plastic surgery is guaranteed to have the high level of training and expertise that will give you the best results. [Choosing an ISAPS surgeon](#) ensures that you’re entrusting your body to a true professional who is qualified, experienced, has a record of safety, demonstrates strong commitment to ethical practices and is trained in the safest, most up-to-date procedures and methods. Our website makes it easy to [find a surgeon](#) near you who specializes in liposuction and can help you make the best choice for finally achieving the body of your dreams.