

Lose fat without surgery: How effective is CoolSculpting?



Hundreds of thousands of people undergo liposuction each year, but a relatively new treatment called "CoolSculpting" claims to remove fat without surgery. This is one of the rare times where the academics CBS News spoke to all agreed that the procedure works if it's used on the right patients, reports CBS News' Vinita Nair.



If you've ever seen before and after pictures following a fat removal procedure, then these photos are not that surprising. However, when you hear the fat was removed after just four treatments without using a knife or a needle, these results are unprecedented. Dr. Neil Sadick, professor at Weil Cornell Medical College, said the procedure has "the most proven technology." It was created by two Harvard doctors,

and as of last month, it was cleared by the FDA for treating a patient's thighs, love handles and belly.

"I feel a major vacuum," patient Melissa Allerton said while receiving the treatment on her abdomen. The 33-year-old yoga teacher and private chef said it felt like a thin sheet of ice.

The process of CoolSculpting feels like ice because this device is freezing the fat cells directly below it. Once they're frozen, the fat cells drain naturally from the body. It can take six to 12 weeks to see the results, but a patient can lose half an inch from his or her waistline after just one one-hour treatment. An area can be treated multiple times, but Sadick said the first treatment is usually the most effective.

"These techniques are not substitutes for liposuction. They're not for people that have large amounts of fat that needs to be removed," Sadick said.

The idea stemmed from doctors' observation that children who eat popsicles grow up to be adults with dimples because the cold killed the fat cells in their cheeks.

Temporary side effects include occasional bruising and a little bit of redness, Sadick said.

The latest report by the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons shows the U.S. is the leading country for surgical cosmetic procedures with more than 1 million performed every year. That includes more than 110,000 tummy tucks and 220,000 liposuctions.

Worldwide, 425,000 CoolSculpting treatments were performed last year alone.

One abdominal treatment is about \$1,300 and each love handle costs about \$800.

When asked about her hopes after the procedure, Allerton said she wanted her abdomen to "be a little four pack this year and not just a two pack."

Allerton said she was drawn to the procedure because it is so minimal she can teach a yoga class after the treatment.

Other doctors CBS News spoke to that had no financial relationship with the product said there was still no magic pill for weight loss, but they all agreed that for the right patient CoolSculpting works.

While the fat cells that are treated drain from the body, there are still other surrounding fat cells that can expand, so a patient has to maintain a healthy diet and exercise.

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