

LIPPO

MYTH VS. REALITY

RUNWAY MODELS STRUT THEIR STUFF ON THE CATWALK IN PARIS, MILAN, LONDON AND TOKYO. FROM THEIR ULTRA CHIC CLOTHES TO THEIR OH, SO PERFECT HAIR, THE LOOK IS ALL ABOUT THE SILHOUETTE.

by Karen Dobkin

Sculptured, contoured, defined. The make-up artist, the fashion designer and the hair stylist are artists who look at their model and choose the clothes, the colors and the cut that are uniquely suited to the individual. A competent, qualified cosmetic surgeon looks at you the same way when you schedule a body sculpting liposuction treatment.

David M. Amron, MD, is a board-certified dermatological surgeon who has 14 years experience focusing on liposculpture surgery and revision liposuction surgery. At his Beverly Hills practice, Spalding Drive Cosmetic Surgery, Dr. Amron has performed thousands of successful liposuction procedures. Dr. Amron has written and lectured extensively about liposuction myths and the mistakes that lead to costly revisions and bad outcomes. He warns that patients must choose the

procedure—and the surgeon—carefully. Slick and aggressive marketing campaigns are confusing and can push patients toward potentially dangerous or ineffective treatments.

Liposuction is one of the most commonly performed and most misunderstood cosmetic procedures. “It is very confusing these days to sort out all the different procedures that are being marketed as liposuction surgery. In looking through the various forms of marketing, I have come across approximately 40 different names for liposuction surgery,” said Dr. Amron.

So, what’s with all the names? In a word: marketing. Some doctors and the companies they deal with try to position themselves as offering something new. Ultra Lipo and Lipo Lift are two new procedures that are being marketed as

the newest and best procedures. Laser-assisted lipo and ultrasonic liposuction procedures are newer modalities that claim to offer significant advantages. Some doctors, though, don’t agree. Dr. Amron finds that they may actually reduce the control that the surgeon has in terms of accurate contouring and sculpting of the patient.

Some companies suggest new techniques and procedures melt fat, which causes skin tightening, whereas traditional liposuction actually makes your skin looser. While this may appeal to the consumer, Dr. Amron says it’s actually not true. When liposuction is done properly you can get extensive tightening of the skin without having to employ a laser or ultrasonic energy.

Another alternative is a procedure called the bio-ultimate face lift. In this

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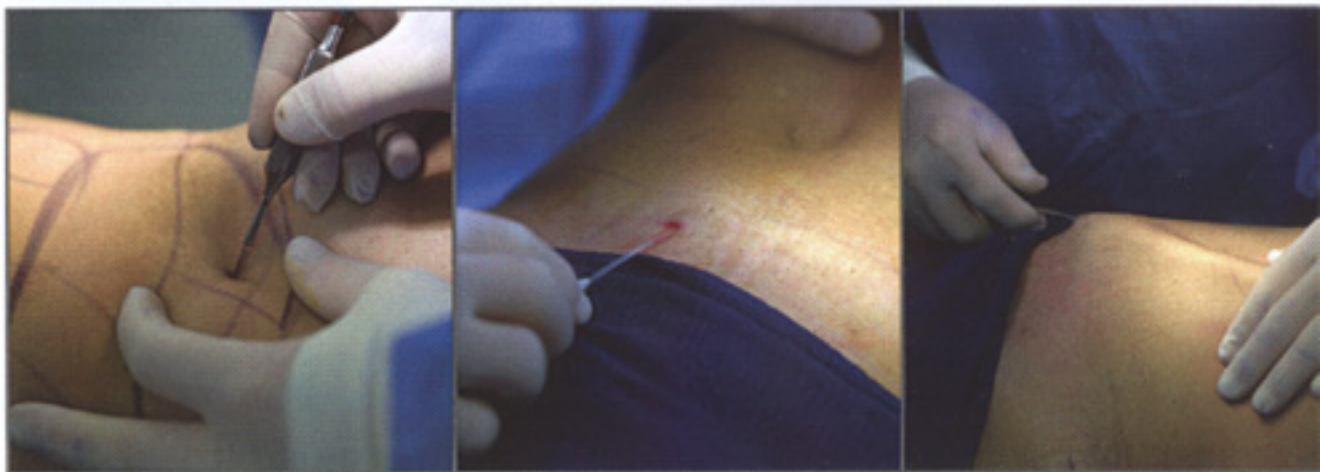
procedure the aesthetic professional uses a combination of products and technology to rejuvenate the skin. Targeted areas are stimulated with micro electric current that encourages new collagen and elastin growth. The treatment improves circulation and results in firmer, younger looking skin. Some doctors recommend up to a dozen microcurrent treatments to achieve best results. In some parts of the country the average cost of one microcurrent treatment is \$100.

“Although there are differing opinions regarding these newer modalities, there are very few liposuction experts around the country who have embraced some of these new methods,” says Dr. Amron. “One of the biggest dangers is that many times the patients are putting their trust in the machine instead of their doctor. Also, these newer modalities are sometimes being used by people without extensive experience in liposuction surgery who think it is going to guarantee them a great result.”

While there are dozens of procedures out there, they can all be separated into two categories – those done under general anesthesia and those done under local anesthesia, which is called pure tumescent liposuction.

Liposuction surgery under general anesthesia has been shown to be far more dangerous than procedures performed under local anesthesia with an approximately 1 in 5,000 mortality rate. On the other hand, procedures performed under local anesthesia, when done properly and within the safe guidelines, have a completely safe track record. There are some other advantages of local anesthesia. Typically there is faster recovery and increased comfort after surgery. Dr. Amron attributes this to the fact that local anesthesia helps to loosen the fatty tissue and allows much more pure fat removal with very little bleeding. In addition, under local anesthesia, the surgeon can avoid jabbing or poking things that do not need to be jabbed, such as muscle. This can cause unnecessary bleeding or bruising. And finally, local anesthesia offers the surgeon the opportunity to achieve better results. Liposuction is a contouring and sculpting procedure. Using local anesthesia, the surgeon is able to position the patient exactly, which is crucial in obtaining a great result.

When it is done properly under local anesthesia, liposuction is quite a safe procedure, but there can be complications and poor results. The main complications that can occur from liposuction surgery are irregularities and asymmetry that can leave the person out of proportion, or with skin dimpling. Studies have shown that the rate of complication rises when liposuction is combined with many other procedures



ABOVE: A LIPOSUCTION SURGERY PROCEDURE IN PROGRESS.

at the same time and the length of the operation is extended.

For such a widely popular procedure, liposuction is greatly misunderstood. When it was first introduced most people thought the procedure was reserved for overweight patients. Others saw it as an alternative to exercise and proper nutrition that keep the body at an acceptable weight. “Liposuction really is a balancing procedure and should only be used to target areas of genetic disproportion to create a balanced body for an individual,” said Dr. Amron. “For me, it has nothing to do with being overweight, underweight or normal weight. It is all about targeting areas of genetic disproportion and reducing them so that if the patient gains or loses weight, they do so more proportionately.”

If you are considering a liposuction procedure, find a board-certified surgeon who has a lot of experience with liposuction surgery in particular. In general, if you find a surgeon who bases most of his or her practice on liposuction, then he or she will most likely have a lot more experience in this procedure.

Most importantly, pay close attention to the consultation itself. Make sure the consultation is done by the surgeon who is doing the procedure and not by somebody else such as a nurse or patient care coordinator. If you feel “sold to” in

the consultation instead of feeling guided and educated, this is also a red flag. Go somewhere else. Make sure the surgeon looks at your entire body to determine how liposuction surgery will create a proper balance and proportion.

You should not choose your liposuction surgery based on the surgeon's fees. Avoid price-driven surgeries. Look for a

qualified, certified surgeon. First, find the right surgeon and then see if the fees are agreeable. Surgical fees can range between \$2,500 and \$5,500 depending on the procedure you are considering. There will also likely be an operating room fee to have your procedure performed in a licensed operating room.

Dr. Amron has noticed a disturbing trend that he calls a diffusion of responsibility or accountability. “There are a growing number of facilities, medspas and other companies that are marketing cosmetic surgery using what they call the team approach,” he said. “This is where the surgeon might not be the one doing the entire procedure or patient evaluation. I think it is important for the surgeon to take complete responsibility and accountability for every aspect of surgery, from the evaluation process to the surgery to the post operative care for the patient. Ultimately, it is all about proper care for the patient.”

A great result from liposuction really depends on two factors more than anything: a good complete, honest and comprehensive evaluation by the surgeon and a meticulous surgical technique. When it comes down to the surgery itself, it is much more about the artistry, eyes, skills, hands, judgment and integrity of the surgeon than it is about the machine that is being used. **RLV**

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