



Pre-op

Immediately post-op

One week post-op

THE INS AND OUTS OF LASER LIPOSUCTION

Understanding The New "Laser" Lipo Procedure

LASER LIPOSUCTION DOES A GREAT JOB IN BODY CONTOURING WHERE TARGETED AREAS OF FAT ARE TO BE REMOVED

Laser liposuction is not a new procedure; it has been around for about 6 years in the United States. The procedure continues to grow in popularity for several reasons. But, first, let's understand the difference between what is called "traditional" liposuction and "laser" liposuction.

Though the procedures are very similar, there are some basic, yet important differences. First, laser lipo is performed (almost always) under local anesthesia (known as tumescent anesthesia) rather than general anesthesia. This eliminates the risks and adverse reactions that can be associated with general anesthesia. Secondly, traditional lipo uses instruments that essentially "rip" out the fat. It is a traumatic event to the body. Laser uses heat to liquefy and destroy the fat before suctioning. The equipment used for laser is much smaller, which helps make healing and recov-

ery time much shorter. The third important difference is that studies have shown that the heat of the laser causes a stimulation of the skin that results in skin tightening that is not achieved with the traditional technique. Laser liposuction does a great job in body contouring where targeted areas of fat are to be removed. It also does well with de-bulking, removing large deposits of fat to make the patient feel and look better. Traditional lipo is still most effective in removing massive amounts of fat when performed in a very controlled and supported environment such as a hospital operating room.

The procedure itself is comprised of five stages; the preoperative, anesthesia, lasering, suctioning and post-operative. In the preoperative stage all paperwork and lab work is reviewed, a brief exam is performed, medical photography completed, and the surgeon will draw landmarks on your body indicating where the fat resides. Also at this stage you will receive medication to relax and calm you.

Once entering the operating room, the areas to be treated will be washed with antibacterial solutions. After

local anesthesia is given, small punctures will be made (see photo) in various areas to allow the instruments access the areas to be treated. Since there is no cutting, there is no need for sutures after the procedure. The surgeon will then introduce a small, 2-4 mm, cannula (straw-like tool) and infuse tumescent anesthesia. This is a mixture of medications and fluids that bathe the fat and anesthetize it. Once infused, the patient rests approximately 45 minutes allowing the full numbing effect to take place. Patients may sleep, watch TV, or even text during this time.

Using the same punctures as above, a laser fiber is then introduced. Since the patient is now anesthetized, there should be no significant discomfort. The surgeon controls the firing of the laser with a foot pedal and with a gentle, repetitive violin-playing type of action, covers the entire area which is being treated. The amount of laser energy and laser time are dependent on the area is being treated, the amount of fat and how much laser energy (joules) the physician decides to use.

Again, using the same punctures as above, the can-

nula is changed to a suctioning device. Suctioning of the fat is done by hand or with a vibrating instrument known as PAL (power assisted lipoplasty). The surgeon will continue removing fat, observing the content in the suction tube and manually evaluating the treated area until satisfied that the appropriate amount has been removed.

Once the suctioning is completed, the post-operative period begins. During this stage, an assistant will clean all areas and place absorbent pads over the puncture sites. These punctures will be left open to drain (see photo). Draining stops as wound closure begins in approximately 24 hours. In some cases, post-operative photos will be taken. The staff will then assist in placing the patient into a compressive garment that will be worn for approximately 2 weeks depending on the individual physician's protocols. Full post-operative instructions, prescriptions and follow-up appointments will be made at this time.

Patients cannot drive themselves home from the procedure.

Now, back to the question of why there are so many different types of lipo being advertised. Let's make this easier to sort out. As noted earlier, there is traditional lipo and there is laser lipo. There are a few other noninvasive "lipo-like" procedures which will not be discussed here.

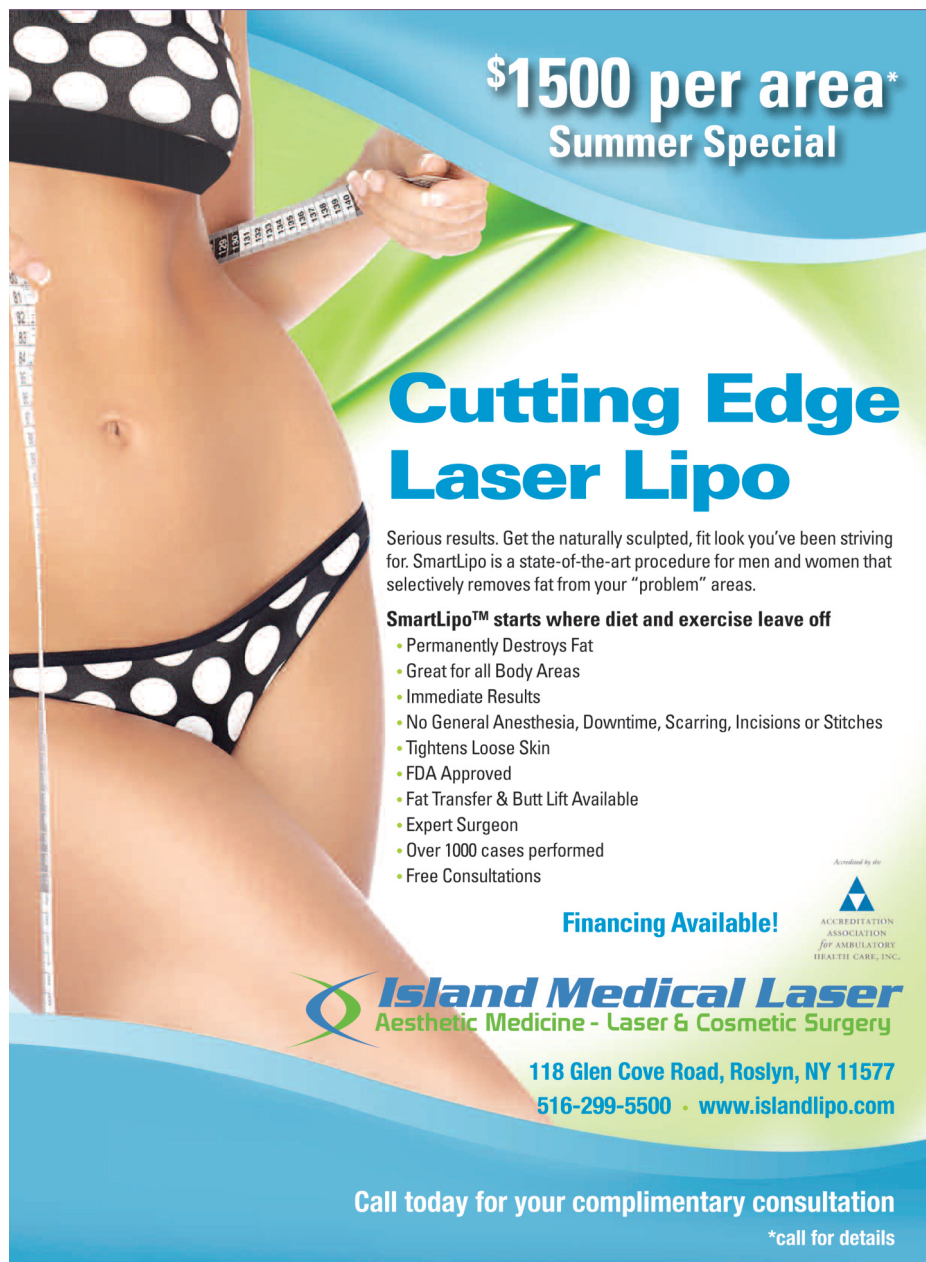
Just as there are many types of paper towels, they are all paper towels! Your personal preference may be Bounty, Scott, or Brawny based on price, design, absorbability or other factors. Similarly, the various types of liposuction procedures are based on the name of the machine being used, but they all share the basics of laser lipo. Each machine claims its own benefits and attributes. Surgeons choose the equipment they believe works best for their use and their patients' needs. Some of the common brands are SmartLipo, Accusculpt, Slim-

Lipo, and Vaser. Many other brands have come and gone. Cynosure's Smartlipo was first to the market and has undergone the most upgrades in this field. It is considered the industry standard and has the largest physician user base in the country.

The current techniques and technologies of laser lipo have created an excellent procedure with a very low risk profile and high safety factor when performed by qualified physicians. That, combined with shorter "down-times", less discomfort, excellent results, and great pricing continue to make laser lipo a very attractive and popular cosmetic procedure for the proper male or female candidates.

IMAGE

Dr. Wayne Wertheim is the medical director of Island Medical Laser in Roslyn, NY. For more information, call 516-299-5500 or visit www.islandlaser.com.



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