



Cover Story

1 LIPOSUCTION

What: A surgical procedure to suck out fat. Doctors can now use a vibrating cannula (power-assisted liposuction), high-power water jets (water jet-assisted liposuction) or high-frequency sound waves (ultrasonic-assisted liposuction) to remove fat.

Cost: To remove one litre of fat from the abdomen, a general practitioner may charge \$4,000 but a plastic surgeon may charge \$10,000.

To remove more than one litre of fat, the procedure will have to be performed in a day surgery facility. Additional charges for the use of the facility start from \$1,500, depending on the length of the operation.

Fat reduction: Doctors estimate a 60 to 70 per cent reduction in the fat layer.

Post-treatment: A compression garment (costing \$100) is worn over the treated area for several weeks to reduce swelling and achieve a better contour. Most patients resume normal activities three to seven days later, but have to avoid vigorous exercise for up to two weeks.

When results can be seen: After the swelling subsides, about one month after surgery, with final results seen from the second month onwards.

'Lipo' versus 'cryo'

2 CRYOLIPOLYSIS

What: A non-invasive procedure to kill fat cells by cooling the area. The fat cells are then removed through the body's natural metabolic processes over several months.

Post-treatment: Patients can resume normal activities immediately, including exercise.

When results can be seen: From the second month onwards.

(a) Proshockice

What: A freezing probe, slightly bigger than an iPhone, administers temperatures of 2 to 5 deg C to the area for between two and four minutes. It is then moved to the next area, eventually covering the entire abdomen, for instance. A conductive gel is then spread over the skin and another probe administers shockwaves (high pressure soundwaves) to the same areas.

Cost: Between \$350 and \$500 for each body part. An entire abdomen may cost between \$450 and \$1,000.

Fat reduction: Unpublished data completed in February from a researcher at the Second University of Naples in Italy on 50 patients showed median fat reduction was 6.8cm for the

abdomen, 5.7cm for the thighs and 5cm for the buttocks after a total of four sessions, at a frequency of one session every 15 days.

(b) CoolSculpting

What: A pad saturated with a cooling gel is placed on the area to protect the skin. The suction from the applicator then pulls the area between two cooling panels where the temperature is kept at around 4 deg C for an hour.

Cost: Treatment of one small area costs \$1,000. Each area is slightly larger than the size of an iPhone. Usually, four areas need to be treated for the abdomen. This will cost between \$4,000 and \$6,000 in total.

Fat reduction: A 2008 study from the Aesthetic Plastic Surgery journal shows a 20.4 per cent reduction in the fat layer on average after two months and 25.5 per cent at six months. The study was funded by Zeltiq Aesthetics, the manufacturer of the CoolSculpting machine.

Sources: Dr Tan Ying Chien, plastic surgeon at Novena Medical Centre; Dr Chan Kok Weng, general practitioner in Upper East Coast Road; Dr Cindy Yang, general practitioner in Orchard Road; Dr Alan Kok, general practitioner in Wisma Atria

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