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CONSENT FOR LIPOSUCTION SURGERY

Liposuction is an elective surgery, which means that it is being performed by choice rather than out of medical necessity. When considering elective surgery, the risks and benefits must be carefully weighed because the only way to avoid the risks entirely is by choosing not to have surgery.

We often describe patients as being "good" or "poor candidates for a particular procedure. This decision is made after taking into consideration factors such as physical findings (e.g., skin quality, body weight, degree of deformity), medical health, history of smoking, emotional state, level of expectation, and whether, in our hands, we can achieve a result that will meet your expectations. If you are told you are not currently a good candidate for a particular procedure, be sure to find out what, if anything can be done to change this. The best candidates for liposuction are individuals of relatively normal weight who have excess fat in particular body areas. Having firm, elastic skin will result in a better final contour after liposuction. Skin that has diminished tone due to stretch marks, weight loss, or natural aging will not reshape itself to the new contours and may require additional surgical techniques to remove and tighten excess skin. Body-contour irregularities due to structures other than fat cannot be improved by this technique. Liposuction by itself will not improve areas of dimpled skin known as "cellulite."

Alternative forms of management consist of not treating the areas of fatty deposits. Diet and exercise regimens may be of benefit in the overall reduction of excess body fat. The procedure is not a replacement for weight loss, and, if possible, diet and exercise should be used to improve your body rather than surgery. Liposuction is intended to sculpt or change your silhouette when you are at or near your ideal body weight. It can be performed on people significantly above their ideal body weight, but the complications may increase. Direct removal of excess skin and fatty tissue may be necessary in addition to liposuction in some patients.

Liposuction is currently one of the most commonly performed plastic surgery procedures. Medical advances in recent years have improved safety of the procedure and the quality of the results. Every surgical procedure involves a certain amount of risk and it is important that you understand these risks and the possible complications associated with them. In addition, every procedure has limitations. An individual's choice to undergo a surgical procedure is based on the comparison of the risk to potential benefit. Although the majority of patients do not experience these complications, you should discuss each of them with your plastic surgeon to make sure you completely understand all possible consequences of liposuction. This consent will talk about the general risks of having surgery, as well as those specifically associated with **Liposuction Surgery**.

Suction-assisted lipectomy surgery is performed by using a hollow metal surgical instrument known as a cannula that is inserted through small skin incision(s) and is passed back and forth through the area of fatty deposit. The cannula is attached to a vacuum source, which provides the suction needed to remove the fatty tissue.

In some situations, a special cannula may be used that emits ultrasonic energy to break down fatty deposits. This technique is known as **ultrasound-assisted lipectomy**. Depending on your needs, your surgeon may recommend suction-assisted lipectomy alone, or in combination with ultrasound-assisted lipectomy.

There are a variety of different techniques used by plastic surgeons for liposuction and care following surgery. Liposuction may be performed under local or general anesthesia. **Tumescent liposuction technique** involves the infiltration of fluid containing dilute local anesthetic and epinephrine into areas of fatty deposits. This technique can reduce discomfort at the time of surgery, blood loss, and post-operative bruising.

- Infection:** Infection is rare following liposuction. Should an infection occur, additional treatment including antibiotics, hospitalization, or additional surgery may be necessary. In extremely rare instances, life-threatening infections, including toxic shock syndrome have been noted after liposuction surgery. Combining this surgery with a contaminated procedure, such as a hysterectomy, does increase the risk of an infection. Antibiotics are usually given immediately before, and for a few days after, surgery to decrease the risk of infection.
- Bleeding:** When liposuction was first performed years ago, bleeding was a major problem. Only 1.5 liters could be removed at one setting before a transfusion was necessary. Now, thanks to the tumescent technique

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(infiltrating the tissue with saline and epinephrine to shrink the blood vessels) much larger volumes can be removed without needing a blood transfusion. It is possible, though unusual, to experience a bleeding episode during or after surgery. Should post-operative bleeding occur, it may require an emergency treatment to drain the accumulated blood or blood transfusion. Hematoma (collection of blood at the surgical site) can occur at any time following injury and may contribute to infection or other problems. Heparin medications that are used to prevent blood clots in veins can produce bleeding and decreased blood platelets. Do not take any aspirin or anti-inflammatory medications for two weeks before or after surgery, as this may increase the risk of bleeding. Non-prescription "herbs" and dietary supplements can increase the risk of surgical bleeding. You will have some bruising after surgery, and if severe, it could cause prolonged or even permanent color changes to the skin. We recommend that you start the Bromelain and Arnica Montana at least three days prior to surgery, and continue it until the bruises are resolved.

- **Asymmetry:** Symmetrical body appearance may not result from liposuction surgery. Factors such as skin tone, fatty deposits, skeletal prominence, and muscle tone may contribute to normal asymmetry in body features. Additional surgery may be necessary to attempt to improve asymmetry. During surgery the amount of time spent on each area as well as the volumes removed are recorded to maintain symmetry. People are rarely perfectly symmetric either before or after surgery.
- **Seroma:** The small incisions made to perform liposuction are usually left open to promote drainage after surgery. This allows for earlier resolution of the swelling, but it is pretty messy the first 24 hours. If this fluid gets trapped inside under the tissue, a seroma may develop. Fluid accumulations infrequently occur in areas where liposuction has been performed. Additional treatments or surgery to drain accumulations of fluid may be necessary.
- **Delayed Healing:** Wound disruption or delayed wound healing is possible. Some areas may not heal normally and may take a long time to heal. Some areas of skin may die. This may require frequent dressing changes or further surgery to remove the non-healed tissue. **Smokers have a greater risk of skin loss and wound healing complications.**
- **Burn:** When ultrasound is performed heat is generated from the tip of the instrument. This is what helps to "melt" or emulsify the fat, making it easier to remove. Ultrasonic energy may produce burns and tissue damage either at the location where the cannula is inserted into the skin or in other areas if the cannula touches the undersurface of the skin for prolonged periods of time. If burns occur, additional treatment and surgery may be necessary.
- **Damage to Deeper Structures:** There is the potential for injury to deeper structures including nerves, blood vessels, muscles, and lungs (pneumothorax) during any surgical procedure. The potential for this to occur varies according to the type of procedure being performed. Injury to deeper structures may be temporary or permanent.
- **Skin Contour Irregularities:** Contour and shape irregularities or depressions may occur after liposuction. Visible and palpable wrinkling of skin can occur. This may improve with time, or it may need to be surgically corrected. This is the most common problem following surgery, and is so common that a small degree should be expected. When the fat is removed with liposuction, the overlying skin can develop irregularities such as ripples or mild dents. The thinner or more lax the overlying skin, the worse this problem can be. If your skin is perfectly smooth prior to surgery, these irregularities will likely be obvious after surgery. If you already have irregularities, such as cellulite, the difference following surgery may not be obvious. Over-suctioning areas can also leave contour irregularities. Most of all, weight gain after surgery will make these irregularities more obvious. There is no question that people look good after liposuction, but the goal is that you look better in your clothes. Because of these irregularities no guarantee can be made that you will look better naked, though the improvement in your overall shape usually outweighs the irregularities of the skin.

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- **Loose Skin:** Liposuction does not tighten the overlying skin, and there may be excess skin following the procedure. If you already have loose skin, the results from liposuction may not be dramatic. Previous pregnancy, large weight loss, and genetic predisposition may all result in pre-existing loose skin. The inner thighs, arms, and sometimes abdomen are areas where the skin is typically less elastic due to the thinness of the skin. Sometimes we will add in other skin tightening procedures to help with this.
- **Weight Gain in Other Areas:** Liposuction does not prevent you from gaining weight in the future. It is a very expensive, risky, and ineffective form of dieting. If you gain a significant amount of weight after liposuction, not only may the areas suctioned have more surface irregularities, you may gain weight in new areas such as the breasts, arms or face. As much as we hate to focus on the horrible bathroom scale, we do recommend weighing yourself intermittently after liposuction because weight can sneak on without you really noticing it.
- **Change in Skin Sensation/Nerve Injury:** It is common to experience diminished (or loss) of skin sensation in areas that have had surgery. This usually resolves over a period of time. Diminished (or complete loss of skin sensation) infrequently occurs and may not totally resolve. Expect numbness in areas of your skin following surgery, which is not such a bad thing when you are wearing your garment. Sensation will gradually return, and it is very rare that this would be a permanent situation. Itching, tenderness, or exaggerated responses to hot or cold temperatures may occur after surgery. Usually this resolve during healing, but in rare situations it may be chronic.
- **Scarring:** All surgery leaves scars, some more visible than others. Although good wound healing after a surgical procedure is expected, abnormal scars may occur within the skin and deeper tissues. Scars may be unattractive and of different color than surrounding skin. Scar appearance may exhibit contour variations compared to the surrounding skin. Scars may be asymmetrical (appear different between right and left side of the body). In some cases, scars may require surgical revision or treatment. Small incisions need to be made to perform the liposuction. They are usually about one centimeter in length, and initially look irritated and red. Once healed, we recommend using silicone-based scar care methods to fade them as much as possible. These scars are usually well hidden and rarely a cosmetic problem.
- **Skin Discoloration / Swelling:** Bruising and swelling normally occur following liposuction. The skin in or near the surgical site can appear either lighter or darker than surrounding skin. Although uncommon, swelling and skin discoloration may persist for long periods of time and, in rare situations, may be permanent. Everyone heals at a different pace, and the degree of swelling will be different from person to person. Expect a large amount of swelling the first two weeks, and after that the swelling will go down more gradually. It may take months before you see your final results.
- **Pain:** You will experience pain after your surgery. There is no question that liposuction hurts, but the healing and resolution of the pain are much faster than with many other surgeries. The amount of pain is related to the amount of liposuction being performed. Numbing medicine placed in the tumescent fluid makes the first twelve hours after surgery easier to tolerate. Pain of varying intensity and duration may occur and persist after liposuction surgery. Chronic pain may occur very infrequently from nerves becoming trapped in scar tissue.
- **Deep Venous Thrombosis:** Blood clots in the legs are problematic after any surgery, but are more common in patients who are overweight, over the age of 40, sedentary after surgery, and having a procedure that last longer than 4 hours or on estrogen. Compression stockings are placed on you before the start of surgery to improve the circulation in your legs. Move your ankles and tighten your calves regularly after surgery, and be sure to get up and walk frequently. If a clot breaks away and travels to the lung (pulmonary embolus) this can be a life-threatening complication.
- **Fat Embolus:** Fat can act like a blood clot during liposuction and cause the same type of problem in the lungs. This has become a very rare complication with the use of the tumescent technique and ultrasound.

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- Allergic Reactions:** In rare cases, local allergies to tape, suture material and glues, blood products, topical preparations or injected agents have been reported. Serious systemic reactions including shock (anaphylaxis) may occur to drugs used during surgery and prescription medications. Allergic reactions may require additional treatment.
- Fat Necrosis:** Fatty tissue found deep in the skin might die. This may produce areas of firmness within the skin. Additional surgery to remove areas of fat necrosis may be necessary. There is the possibility of contour irregularities in the skin that may result from fat necrosis.
- Pubic Distortion:** It is possible, though unusual, for women to develop distortion of their pubic area. Should this occur, additional treatment including surgery may be necessary.
- Persistent Swelling (Lymphedema):** Persistent swelling in the legs can occur following liposuction but this is a rare complication.
- Tumescent Liposuction:** There is the possibility that large volumes of fluid containing dilute local anesthetic drugs and epinephrine that is injected into fatty deposits during surgery may contribute to fluid overload or systemic reaction to these medications. Additional treatment including hospitalization may be necessary.
- Surgical Anesthesia:** Both local and general anesthesia involve risk. There is the possibility of complications, injury, and even death from all forms of surgical anesthesia or sedation. Liposuction can be performed using a variety of anesthetics and these can be discussed with your surgeon and anesthesiologist.
- Need for Hospitalization:** If you are having an extensive surgery, staying overnight in the hospital may be recommended or even required. If you have any problems during surgery, you may need to stay for your safety. Smaller liposuction procedures are routinely performed on an outpatient basis.
- Need for Further Surgery:** On occasionally a touch up surgery for a mild irregularity may need to be performed. This is usually done one year following your initial procedure, and you need to be at or below your pre-op weight.
- Unsatisfactory Result:** Although good results are expected, there is no guarantee or warranty expressed or implied, on the results that may be obtained. You may be disappointed with the results of liposuction surgery. This would include risks such as asymmetry, unsatisfactory or highly visible surgical scar location, unacceptable visible deformities, bunching and rippling in the skin near the suture lines or at the ends of the incisions (dog ears), poor healing, wound disruption, and loss of sensation. It may not be possible to correct or improve the effects of surgical scars. Additional surgery may be required to attempt to improve results.
- Photographs:** Pre-operative and post-operative photos will be taken to help with surgical planning and to document results. These photos (which never include your face) may also be used for teaching purposes to help doctors or other patients.

ADDITIONAL ADVISORIES:

COVID-19 Infection:

If you were to become symptomatic with a COVID-19 infection during your recovery, it could increase your morbidity/mortality and complication rate. There are still many unknowns, and recommendations about COVID-19 do change rapidly. Please follow the updated local health recommendations regarding COVID-19 to protect yourselves and others on: www.denvergov.org/Government/COVID-19-Information.

By signing this consent, I understand I am opting for an elective treatment/procedure/surgery that is not urgent and may not be medically necessary. I understand that possible exposure to COVID-19 before/during/after my treatment/procedure/surgery may result in: a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, extended quarantine/self-isolation, additional tests, emergency room visits or hospitalization that may require medical therapy, Intensive Care treatment, possible need for short or long-term intubation/ventilator support, risk of death, and possible additional risks which may not currently be known at this time.

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Metabolic Status of Massive Weight Loss Patients- Your personal metabolic status of blood chemistry and protein levels may be abnormal following massive weight loss and surgical procedures to make a patient lose weight. Individuals with abnormalities may be a risk for serious medical and surgical complications, including delayed wound healing, infection or even in rare cases, death.

Long-Term Results- Subsequent alterations in the appearance of your body may occur as the result of aging, sun exposure, weight loss, weight gain, pregnancy, menopause or other circumstances not related to your surgery.

Female Patient Information- It is important to inform your plastic surgeon if you use birth control pills, estrogen replacement, or if you believe you may be pregnant. Many medications including antibiotics may neutralize the preventive effect of birth control pills, allowing for conception and pregnancy.

Intimate Relations After Surgery- Surgery involves coagulating of blood vessels and increased activity of any kind may open these vessels leading to a bleed, or hematoma. Activity that increases your pulse or heart rate may cause additional bruising, swelling, and the need for return to surgery and control bleeding. It is wise to refrain from sexual activity until your physician states it is safe.

Mental Health and Elective Surgery- It is important that all patients seeking to undergo elective surgery have realistic expectations that focus on improvement rather than perfection. Complications or less than satisfactory results are sometimes unavoidable, may require additional surgery and often are stressful. Please openly discuss with your surgeon, prior to surgery, any history that you may have of significant emotional depression or mental health issues. Although many individuals may benefit psychologically from the results of elective surgery, effects on mental health cannot be accurately predicted.

Medications- There are many adverse reactions that occur as the result of taking over-the-counter, herbal, and/or prescription medications. Be sure to check with your physician about any drug interactions that may exist with medications which you are already taking. If you have an adverse reaction, stop the drugs immediately and call your plastic surgeon for further instructions. If the reaction is severe, go immediately to the nearest emergency room. When taking the prescribed pain medications after surgery, realize that they can affect your thought process and coordination. Do not drive, do not operate complex equipment, do not make any important decisions and do not drink any alcohol while taking these medications. Be sure to take your prescribed medication only as directed.

ADDITIONAL SURGERY NECESSARY

There are many variable conditions in addition to risk and potential surgical complications that may influence the long-term result from liposuction. Secondary surgery may be necessary to obtain optimal results. Even though risks and complications occur infrequently, the risks cited are particularly associated with a liposuction surgery. Other complications and risks can occur but are even more uncommon. Should complications occur, additional surgery or other treatments may be necessary. The practice of medicine and surgery is not an exact science. Although good results are expected, there is no guarantee or warranty expressed or implied, on the results that may be obtained.

PATIENT COMPLIANCE

Follow all physician instructions carefully; this is essential for the success of your outcome. It is important that the surgical incisions are not subjected to excessive force, swelling, abrasion, or motion during the time of healing. Personal and vocational activity needs to be restricted. Protective dressings and drains should not be removed unless instructed by your plastic surgeon. Successful post-operative function depends on both surgery and subsequent care. Physical activity that increases your pulse or heart rate may cause bruising, swelling, fluid accumulation and the need for return to surgery. It is wise to refrain from intimate physical activities after surgery

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until your physician states it is safe. It is important that you participate in follow-up care, return for aftercare, and promote your recovery after surgery.

Informed-consent documents are used to communicate information about the proposed surgical treatment of a disease or condition along with disclosure of risks and alternative forms of treatment(s), including no surgery. The informed-consent process attempts to define principles of risk disclosure that should generally meet the needs of most patients in most circumstances.

However, informed-consent documents should not be considered all inclusive in defining other methods of care and risks encountered. Your plastic surgeon may provide you with additional or different information which is based on all the facts in your particular case and the current state of medical knowledge.

Informed-consent documents are not intended to define or serve as the standard of medical care. Standards of medical care are determined on the basis of all of the facts involved in an individual case and are subject to change as scientific knowledge and technology advance and as practice patterns evolve.

It is important that you read the above information carefully and have all of your questions answered before signing this consent.

Medicine is not an exact science, so no guarantees can be made regarding complications or outcome. We do everything possible to ensure your safety, and strive for the best result in every case. We hope that you will also do your part by following your post-operative instructions, using good judgment, and letting us know if there are any problems.

Please ask any questions you may have regarding the surgery or potential risks prior to signing this form. Your signature means that you have had a chance to read and discuss the common risks associated with Liposuction surgery, and you agree to proceed. A separate consent form from the hospital will also need to be signed for the medical record.

Patient or Person Authorized to sign for Patient: _____ Date: _____

Witness: _____ Date: _____