Body Surgery Melbourne - Procedures, Costs and Risks - Me Clinic

Canonical: https://www.meclinic.com.au/body/

Details:

We see patients in Malvern East. Our plastic surgeons perform body contouring and other body surgery procedures in accredited private hospitals around Melbourne. The clinic has over 35 years of plastic and cosmetic surgery experience and was among the first in Australia to perform liposuction, in the early 1980s.

Start here: what you have noticed, and where to read

Most people arrive knowing what bothers them, not what the operation is called. This table goes from one to the other.

What you have noticed	Usually	Where to read
A soft handful you can pinch and lift	Subcutaneous fat	Liposuction
A firm, round abdomen you cannot grip	Visceral fat, behind the muscle	Liposuction vs weight loss surgery
Loose skin that hangs, with a crease beneath	Excess skin	Tummy tuck , arm lift , thigh lift
A ridge down the middle of the abdomen when you sit up	Abdominal muscle separation	Tummy tuck — and physiotherapy first
Firm tissue behind the male nipple	Glandular tissue	Gynaecomastia surgery
Ropey or bulging leg veins, aching or swelling	Varicose veins	Vein treatments
Fine flat red or purple lines on the legs	Spider veins	Spider veins
Labial discomfort, chafing or catching	—	Vaginal surgery and the alternatives
Fullness above the pubic bone	Mons pubis fat, skin, or a tethered scar	Mons pubis
Unwanted body hair	—	Body hair removal
You want to know what it costs first	—	Pricing

Most people have more than one of these at once, and the mix decides the plan. The single most useful thing you can do before a consultation is work out whether your concern is fat, skin, muscle or something else — because those are four different operations.

Procedures offered

Tummy tuck (abdominoplasty) — removes excess fat and loose skin from the abdominal region and can tighten underlying abdominal muscles.

Liposuction — removes localised fat deposits from areas including the abdomen, hips, thighs and arms. A contouring procedure, not a weight loss method.

Thigh lift — reduces excess skin and fat from the inner and outer thighs.

Male breast surgery (gynaecomastia) — removes excess fat and glandular tissue from the male chest.

Vaginal surgery — cosmetic and restorative procedures including labiaplasty and vaginoplasty.

Vein treatments — for chronic venous insufficiency including varicose veins, spider veins and reticular veins.

Body hair removal — including laser hair removal.

What sits outside body surgery

Several things bring people here that are not cosmetic problems, and it saves time to know them:

Weight loss itself. No procedure here is a treatment for obesity. Where substantial weight loss is the goal, that conversation belongs with your GP.

A lump you can feel , anywhere — that is assessed before anything cosmetic is discussed.

Swelling of both legs , particularly with breathlessness, which is more often a heart, kidney or medication issue.

A sudden swollen, hot, painful calf — possible deep vein thrombosis, and urgent.

Abdominal pain, a bulge that appears on coughing, or a hernia.

Skin that is itching, ulcerating or changing , which needs a diagnosis rather than a procedure.

Anything still changing — weight, a pregnancy plan, a recent operation. Timing is part of the assessment.

None of these is a refusal. They are things that get sorted out before, or instead of, surgery.

Costs

Prices vary with the type of surgery, its complexity, the hospital used and individual patient needs. You receive a tailored quote after your consultations, covering surgeon fees, anaesthesia, hospital costs and post-operative care such as garments and medications.

As a guide:

Abdominoplasty (tummy tuck) — $17,000 to $28,000.

Gynaecomastia (male breast reduction) — $9,000 to $12,000.

Labiaplasty — $9,000 to $13,000.

Body liposuction — $6,000 to $8,000 per hour.

Stomach liposuction — $6,000 to $8,000 per hour.

Arm liposuction — $6,000 to $8,000 per hour.

As at September 2024 and including GST, a consultation with a Specialist Plastic Surgeon is $350, a vein consultation with a doctor (which may include ultrasound) is $230, and a consultation with a Cosmetic Doctor is $150. A partial Medicare rebate may be available for some consultations if you have a valid GP referral and meet the criteria.

Payment for major surgery is due four weeks before the procedure; for minor procedures, before surgery. Cash, EFTPOS, direct deposit and major credit cards are accepted, with surcharges applying to cards. Medical clinics cannot provide finance directly, but independent medical finance companies are available.

A real quote names the surgeon’s fee, the anaesthetist, the hospital or theatre, garments, every follow-up visit and the revision policy. A single figure is a number, not a quote. See how a quote is built .

Medicare and private health insurance

Purely cosmetic surgery is not covered by Medicare. Medically necessary body surgery may qualify for a rebate where it meets the strict criteria attached to a Medicare Benefits Schedule item number. Relevant item numbers include:

30175 — abdominoplasty for diastasis recti (abdominal muscle separation) in post-pregnancy women.

30177 — abdominoplasty after massive weight loss.

31525 and 31526 — gynaecomastia, unilateral and bilateral.

104 and 105 — medical consultations and patient reviews.

Excess skin removal surgery after massive weight loss — such as an arm lift, thigh lift or lower body lift — can also qualify. Item numbers are updated periodically, so confirm the current numbers and criteria with your surgeon and on MBS Online. Without meeting the criteria, surgery is considered elective and no rebate applies.

If you are eligible for an item number and hold the right level of cover, your health insurer may subsidise part of the cost. We are not a no-gap provider, so a significant out-of-pocket payment remains.

One practical point that decides more claims than anything else: eligibility turns on documented symptoms — rashes in a fold, physiotherapy for a muscle separation, weight loss records, what has been tried and for how long. Symptoms discussed but never written down cannot be assessed, so get them into your GP notes well before the consultation. Ask your fund about waiting periods too, which catch people who joined or upgraded recently.

The consultation process

Arrive about 15 minutes early to complete paperwork for your medical record. Your general medical history is established — health, medications, allergies and previous operations — and a physical assessment is performed before the appropriate options are discussed.

To get the most from the appointment, send your registration form and any requested photos in early, prepare a list of questions, and consider bringing a support person, as a lot of information is covered. Consultation fees are due at the time of booking.

Your rights apply throughout: you may bring a support person, ask for a chaperone during any examination, decline photography, request a practitioner of a particular gender when booking, and stop an examination at any point.

Referral and cooling-off period

Since 1 July 2023, all patients are required to have a GP referral before seeing a plastic surgeon or doctor about cosmetic surgery, and at least two consultations are required, one of them in person with the operating surgeon. A valid referral is also needed if you wish to claim a Medicare rebate on medically essential surgery.

For any cosmetic surgery there is a compulsory one-week cooling-off period after your second consultation before surgery can be booked or a deposit paid. For anyone under 18 it is three months, with a mandatory psychological assessment. See cosmetic surgery rule changes .

Anaesthesia and where surgery is performed

All major surgery is performed under general anaesthesia in accredited private hospitals around Melbourne. Small skin procedures may be performed in clinic under local anaesthesia. Some procedures require an overnight stay for safety; where same-day discharge is possible your surgeon will discuss it at consultation.

Our surgeons have operating rights at Masada Private Hospital (St Kilda East), Epworth Geelong (Waurn Ponds), St Vincent's Werribee, Sir John Monash Private Hospital (Clayton), Peninsula Private Hospital (Langwarrin) and Linacre Private Hospital (Hampton). Hospital costs differ between facilities, which is one reason quoted prices vary between patients.

Your surgeon visits you in hospital after the operation and sees you again at the clinic about a week later.

Recovery — general guidance

Recovery varies by procedure, and your surgeon will give you instructions specific to your case. As general guidance across body surgery:

Going home. You cannot drive yourself. You need someone to drive you home and stay with you for at least 24 hours.

Medication. Painkillers and antibiotics are often prescribed. Take pain relief as directed.

Garments. Compression garments are used after many body procedures to aid comfort, reduce bruising and control swelling.

Work. Most people return after two to three weeks, earlier or part-time if you can work from home. Medical certificates can be provided for work or to suspend a gym membership.

Exercise. Gentle walking for the first week or two, increasing distance and pace over the following two to four weeks. Most people are back to their regular routine by six to eight weeks. After abdominoplasty with muscle repair, wait around twelve weeks before any core work.

Flying. Domestic flights are usually fine at around two weeks. Wait six to eight weeks before international or long-haul travel.

Swimming. Wait six to eight weeks, so incisions are well healed.

Follow-up. Most patients are seen at seven to ten days, then at six to eight weeks, three months, six months and twelve months.

When to judge the result

The same pattern applies across almost every procedure on this page, and looking too early is the commonest source of unnecessary distress:

Days 1–3: swelling increases. You look worse, not better.

Weeks 2–4: firm, lumpy, numb and uneven. The stage people panic.

Weeks 6–8: a shape emerging; scars at their reddest and firmest.

Three months: the first fair look.

Twelve to eighteen months: the settled result, with scars faded.

Do not make decisions about revision before three months.

Wound care and signs of a problem

Clean hands before touching the wound area. Clean gently with mild saline or as directed, pat rather than scrub, keep the area dry, and change dressings as advised. Do not apply ointments or creams unless prescribed.

Contact your medical team immediately if you notice increased redness or warmth around the wound, persistent or worsening pain, discharge or pus, a foul smell, or fever and chills.

Seek urgent attention for sudden breathlessness or chest pain, a calf that becomes swollen, hot and painful, or rapidly increasing one-sided swelling with pain in the first day.

Risks and complications

All surgical procedures carry risks and potential complications. These are discussed with you in detail during the consultation process, and you are given written information to take home. Please read our information on the risks and complications of cosmetic surgery before proceeding.

General risks of cosmetic surgery include infection, bruising, swelling, pain, scarring, bleeding and haematoma, seroma, nerve damage, anaesthesia complications, blood clots (DVT and pulmonary embolism), psychological impact, and unsatisfactory results requiring further surgery. Seroma is most common after a tummy tuck. Liposuction can be traumatic for internal organs, and visceral perforation, while rare, can occur.

Wherever an incision is made there will be a scar. A well-placed incision sutured in fine detail typically fades over time, though how a scar heals varies with the procedure and your genetic makeup.

Any surgical or invasive procedure carries risks. Before proceeding you should seek a second opinion from an appropriately qualified health practitioner.

Who performs the surgery

The title Specialist Plastic Surgeon applies only to a recognised specialist who has completed the training program of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) in plastic surgery. In Australia the title Surgeon is protected and may only be used by a fellow of the College. See the Me Clinic team , our guidance on choosing the right cosmetic practitioner , and the risks of overseas cosmetic surgery .

Common questions about body surgery

Which procedure do I need?

It depends what the tissue is. A soft handful is fat; a firm abdomen you cannot grip is visceral; a hanging fold is skin; a ridge when you sit up is muscle separation; firm tissue behind a male nipple is gland.

What is the most useful thing to do before a consultation?

Work out whether your concern is fat, skin, muscle or something else — those are four different operations.

What procedures are offered?

Tummy tuck, liposuction, thigh lift, male breast surgery, vaginal surgery, vein treatments and body hair removal.

Is any of this weight loss surgery?

No. Nothing here treats obesity. Where substantial weight loss is the goal, that conversation belongs with your GP.

What should be checked before anything cosmetic?

Any lump, swelling of both legs especially with breathlessness, a sudden swollen hot painful calf, abdominal pain or a bulge on coughing, and skin that is itching, ulcerating or changing.

What do the procedures cost?

Abdominoplasty $17,000 to $28,000; gynaecomastia $9,000 to $12,000; labiaplasty $9,000 to $13,000; body, stomach and arm liposuction $6,000 to $8,000 per hour of theatre time.

What do consultations cost?

Specialist Plastic Surgeon $350, vein consultation $230, Cosmetic Doctor $150, as at September 2024 including GST.

What should a quote name?

Surgeon, anaesthetist, hospital or theatre, garments, every follow-up and the revision policy. A single figure is not a quote.

When is payment due?

Four weeks before major surgery; before the procedure for minor ones.

Can the clinic arrange finance?

No — medical clinics cannot provide finance directly, though independent medical finance companies are available.

Which item numbers might apply?

30175 for abdominoplasty addressing diastasis recti post-pregnancy, 30177 after massive weight loss, 31525 and 31526 for gynaecomastia, and 104 and 105 for consultations.

What decides Medicare eligibility in practice?

Documented symptoms — rashes in a fold, physiotherapy for a muscle separation, weight loss records, what was tried and for how long. Undocumented symptoms cannot be assessed.

Are you a no-gap provider?

No. A significant out-of-pocket payment remains even where a rebate applies.

What are my rights at a consultation?

You may bring a support person, ask for a chaperone, decline photography, request a practitioner of a particular gender, and stop an examination at any point.

What are the rules before booking?

A GP referral, at least two consultations with one of them being in person with the operating surgeon, and a one-week cooling-off period — three months plus a psychological assessment for anyone under 18.

Where is surgery performed?

Accredited private hospitals around Melbourne including Masada, Epworth Geelong, St Vincent's Werribee, Sir John Monash, Peninsula and Linacre. Small skin procedures may be done in clinic under local anaesthesia.

Why do quoted prices vary between patients?

Partly because hospital costs differ between facilities, and partly because operating time differs.

How long until I am back at work?

Most people at two to three weeks, earlier or part-time if you can work from home.

When can I exercise again?

Gentle walking in the first week or two, building over the following month, most people back to their routine by six to eight weeks — and around twelve weeks before core work after abdominoplasty with muscle repair.

When can I fly or swim?

Domestic flights at around two weeks; six to eight weeks for long-haul travel and swimming.

When can I judge the result?

Three months for a first fair look and twelve to eighteen months for the settled result. Do not make revision decisions before three months.

What are the signs of a problem?

Increased redness or warmth, worsening pain, discharge or pus, a foul smell, or fever and chills. Sudden breathlessness, chest pain, a swollen hot painful calf or rapid one-sided swelling need urgent attention.

Who performs the surgery?

Specialist Plastic Surgeons who have completed the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons training program in plastic surgery.

Individual results may vary. Any surgical or invasive procedure carries risks. Before proceeding you should seek a second opinion from an appropriately qualified health practitioner.