Back Liposuction Melbourne - Upper and Lower Back - Me Clinic

Canonical: https://www.meclinic.com.au/body/liposuction/back-fat/

Details:

Our plastic surgeons perform liposuction for localised fat in the upper or lower back. The procedure is suitable for both men and women and targets fat deposits in the back that have not responded to diet and exercise.

Fat accumulation in the back can be influenced by ageing, weight gain and genetics, among other factors.

Who this is for

You have a discrete roll or bulge on the back that stays the same whether you are heavier or lighter

Your weight has been stable for at least six months

You are in good general health and within about 30 percent of your ideal body weight

You want the contour changed, not a number on a scale changed

You can take two to three weeks away from work and six weeks away from training

Who it is not for

Anyone whose main issue is loose skin rather than fat - very common after major weight loss. Liposuction will make loose skin look worse, not better, because the volume underneath it is what was holding it out.

Anyone still losing weight. Come back when it has held for six months.

Anyone hoping it will fix how clothes fit everywhere. It changes one area.

Anyone who cannot stop smoking around the procedure. Smokers have an increased risk of complications from any surgery.

Anyone being pushed into it by someone else. That is a reason to say no, and saying so at consultation is not awkward - it is the point of the consultation.

What it addresses

Localised fat deposits in the upper back.

Localised fat deposits in the lower back.

Rolls or bulges caused by fatty deposits in the back region.

Disproportion between the back and the rest of the body.

Outcomes vary depending on individual anatomy, skin quality and the volume of fat removed. Individual results may vary.

What sits outside this procedure

Naming the boundary is more useful than listing the benefits.

Loose or lax skin. A skin excision procedure is the relevant option, not liposuction.

Posture. Rounded shoulders and a forward head position change how the upper back reads in a mirror and in photographs. Surgery does not address that; it is worth knowing before you attribute the whole appearance to fat.

Muscle bulk or definition. Liposuction removes fat. It does not build anything.

Weight. It is a contouring procedure, not a weight loss method.

The abdomen or flanks. Those are separate areas and are priced separately.

Fat versus skin

Liposuction removes fat. It does not remove loose skin or tighten significantly lax skin.

Where the concern is predominantly excess skin - which can follow substantial weight loss - liposuction alone will not achieve the result, and a skin excision procedure would be required instead. Your surgeon will assess which applies in your case at consultation.

A rough guide you can apply yourself before you come in: pinch the roll. If most of what you are holding is soft and thick, it is fat. If it is thin and stays creased when you let go, it is skin. Bring that observation to the consultation - it is a useful starting point, though the assessment is what settles it.

What the procedure involves

A cannula is inserted through small incisions and attached to a suction device, extracting fat from the treated area. Incisions are placed as discreetly as the anatomy allows.

The back is a firmer, more fibrous area than the abdomen or thighs, which can make fat extraction more demanding technically. The procedure can be performed under local or general anaesthesia depending on the volume of fat and the number of areas treated. See local or general anaesthesia .

The process, start to finish

GP referral. Required since 1 July 2023 before you can see a surgeon about cosmetic surgery. Your GP is also the right person to raise anything about your general health.

First consultation with a Specialist Plastic Surgeon - $350 including GST as at September 2024. Your back is examined, the fat-versus-skin question is settled, and you are told plainly whether liposuction is the right procedure.

Written quote and risk information to take home and read without anyone in the room.

Second consultation. Questions you thought of afterwards. This is the useful one - bring a list.

Seven-day cooling-off period after the second consultation. Compulsory. It runs whether or not you feel you need it.

Booking and pre-operative instructions - fasting, medications to stop, what to bring, compression garment sizing.

Procedure day. Same-day discharge in most cases; someone drives you home where a general anaesthetic was used.

Review at seven to ten days , then six to eight weeks, three months, six months and twelve months.

From referral to surgery is realistically several weeks, and most of that is the mandatory waiting. Nobody should be offering you a date next week.

Suitability

A good candidate is in good general health with realistic expectations, has localised fat rather than predominantly loose skin, and is at a stable weight. Liposuction is a contouring procedure rather than a weight loss method, and is generally appropriate for people within about 30 percent of their ideal body weight.

Smokers have an increased risk of complications from any surgery.

Circumstances that change the picture

After major weight loss. The back is one of the areas where skin quality is most often the limiting factor. Expect the assessment to be about skin, not fat.

Men. Back and flank fat is a common male distribution pattern and is often firmer and more fibrous than the same volume elsewhere, which affects technique and time.

Bra-line rolls specifically. What sits above and below a band is partly fat and partly tissue compressed by the band. The compressed appearance is not fat and does not need removing.

Long-term weight fluctuation. Fat cells removed do not return, but the remaining cells enlarge if weight is regained. The result holds in proportion to how stable your weight stays.

Costs

Back liposuction falls within the general per-area surgeon's fee range of $4,000 to $8,000 for one area. Where the upper and lower back are treated as separate areas, two-area pricing of $9,000 to $15,000 applies.

Hospital, theatre and anaesthetist fees are additional; anaesthetist fees range from $800 to $1,200 per hour where a general anaesthetic is used. As at September 2024 and including GST, a consultation with a Specialist Plastic Surgeon is $350.

See liposuction costs for the full breakdown.

What the quoted figure does and does not include

The surgeon's fee is one line. Ask for the total, in writing, with each of these named separately: surgeon's fee, anaesthetist fee, hospital or theatre fee, compression garments, follow-up appointments, and what a revision would cost if one were needed. A figure that does not name all of those is not a quote.

Note also that liposuction is quoted on two different bases across this site - a surgeon's fee per area, and a figure per hour of theatre time. They measure different things. Your written quote is the one that applies to you.

What you should leave the consultation with

A written quote itemised as above

Written risk information, taken home and read

Whether local or general anaesthesia is proposed, and why

How many areas you are being charged for, and where the boundary between them falls

Your surgeon's name and AHPRA registration number, which you can check yourself at ahpra.gov.au

A number to call after hours, and who answers it

Your review dates

Recovery

You need someone to drive you home and stay with you for at least 24 hours where a general anaesthetic is used.

Compression garments are worn to reduce swelling and assist recovery.

Expect swelling and bruising, settling over the following weeks.

Avoid exercise for the first two weeks; gentle walking is encouraged.

Most people return to work after two to three weeks and to their usual exercise routine by around six weeks.

Domestic flights are usually fine at around two weeks; wait six to eight weeks for international flights and before swimming.

Sleeping position can be less comfortable after back liposuction than after treatment of other areas. Your surgeon will advise on this.

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

Practical things specific to the back

You cannot reach the treated area. Dressings, garments and checking the wounds all need someone else for the first week or two. Arrange that before the day, not after.

Sleeping. Back and side sleeping are both affected. Work out in advance whether you can sleep semi-upright, and set up pillows before you go in rather than at 2am.

Getting dressed. Front-fastening tops for the first fortnight. Anything you pull over your head involves the exact movement you want to avoid.

Car seats. A firm seat back presses directly on the treated area. A folded towel helps on longer drives once you are cleared to drive.

Aftercare: expected, and not expected

Expected: swelling, bruising that changes colour over two to three weeks, numbness or odd sensation in the treated area that can take months to settle fully, firmness or lumpiness under the skin as it resolves, and fluid oozing from the small incisions in the first days.

Call us for a fever, increasing rather than settling pain, spreading redness or heat, pus or a bad smell from an incision, a wound that opens, or swelling that is suddenly worse on one side.

Call 000 for chest pain, shortness of breath, or pain and swelling in one calf. Those are signs of a clot and are not something to wait out or to ring us about first.

How long the result lasts

The fat cells removed do not grow back. The cells that remain can enlarge if you gain weight, so the contour changes with your weight even though those particular cells are gone permanently. Someone who gains 10 kilograms after back liposuction will store it differently than before, not nowhere.

Swelling means the final contour is not visible for around three months, and continues to refine for up to a year. Judging the result at six weeks is judging swelling.

Risks and complications

All surgical procedures carry risks and potential complications, including infection, bruising, swelling, pain, scarring, bleeding and haematoma, seroma, contour irregularity, changes in sensation from nerve damage, anaesthesia complications and blood clots. Liposuction can be traumatic for internal organs, and visceral perforation, while uncommon, is a recognised risk.

Risks 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.

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

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. 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.

Patients under 18 have additional requirements: a three-month cooling-off period and an independent assessment by a registered psychologist, psychiatrist or GP.

Common questions about back liposuction

Is the back harder to treat than other areas?

Technically, yes. The back is a firmer, more fibrous area than the abdomen or thighs, which makes fat extraction more demanding. It is routinely treated, but it is not the easiest area and experience matters.

Will it get rid of the rolls if they are mostly loose skin?

No. Liposuction removes fat; it does not remove loose skin or tighten significantly lax skin. Where the concern is predominantly excess skin - which can follow substantial weight loss - a skin excision procedure is required instead. Your surgeon assesses which applies at consultation.

How can I tell which I have before I come in?

Pinch the roll. If most of what you are holding is soft and thick, it is fat; if it is thin and stays creased when you let go, it is skin. Bring that observation with you - it is a starting point, not the answer.

Could some of it be posture rather than fat?

Partly, yes, for the upper back. Rounded shoulders and a forward head position change how the area reads in a mirror and in photographs, and surgery does not address that.

What about the rolls above and below my bra band?

Some of that is fat and some is tissue compressed by the band. The compressed appearance is not fat and does not need removing - worth separating the two before deciding what you are treating.

Are the upper and lower back charged as one area or two?

One area falls within the surgeon's fee range of $4,000 to $8,000. Where the upper and lower back are treated as separate areas, two-area pricing of $9,000 to $15,000 applies. Hospital, theatre and anaesthetist fees are additional.

What should a proper quote include?

Surgeon's fee, anaesthetist fee, hospital or theatre fee, compression garments, follow-up appointments, and what a revision would cost. A figure that does not name all of those is not a quote.

Local or general anaesthetic?

It depends on the volume of fat and the number of areas treated. With a general anaesthetic, anaesthetist fees run $800 to $1,200 per hour, and you need someone to drive you home and stay with you for at least 24 hours.

Will sleeping be uncomfortable?

More so than after treatment of other areas, because of where the treated tissue sits. Set your pillows up before the day rather than working it out at 2am, and ask your surgeon about position.

Will I be able to manage the dressings myself?

Not on your own back. Dressings, garments and checking the wounds need someone else for the first week or two, so arrange that before the procedure.

What should I wear afterwards?

Front-fastening tops for the first fortnight - anything you pull over your head involves the movement you most want to avoid.

How long until I can work and exercise again?

Most people return to work after two to three weeks. Avoid exercise for the first two weeks - gentle walking is encouraged - and expect to be back to your usual routine by around six weeks.

When can I fly or swim?

Domestic flights are usually fine at around two weeks. Wait six to eight weeks for international flights, and the same before swimming.

When will I see the actual result?

The contour is not final for around three months and continues to refine for up to a year. Judging it at six weeks is judging swelling.

Does the fat come back?

The cells removed do not. The cells that remain enlarge if you gain weight, so the contour changes with your weight - someone who gains 10 kilograms afterwards stores it differently than before, not nowhere.

Am I a suitable candidate?

Good general health, realistic expectations, localised fat rather than predominantly loose skin, and a stable weight - generally within about 30 percent of your ideal body weight. Smokers have an increased risk of complications from any surgery.

How long should my weight have been stable?

At least six months. If you are still losing, come back when it has held.

What is normal in recovery?

Swelling, bruising that changes colour over two to three weeks, numbness or odd sensation that can take months to settle, firmness or lumpiness under the skin, and fluid oozing from the small incisions in the first days.

When should I call us?

Fever, increasing rather than settling pain, spreading redness or heat, pus or a bad smell from an incision, a wound that opens, or swelling suddenly worse on one side.

When should I call 000 instead?

Chest pain, shortness of breath, or pain and swelling in one calf. Those are signs of a clot - do not wait and do not ring us first.

What are the risks?

Infection, bruising, swelling, pain, scarring, bleeding and haematoma, seroma, contour irregularity, changes in sensation from nerve damage, anaesthesia complications and blood clots. Liposuction can also be traumatic for internal organs, and visceral perforation, while uncommon, is a recognised risk.

What has to happen before I can book?

A GP referral, required since 1 July 2023 before seeing a surgeon about cosmetic surgery, then a compulsory one-week cooling-off period after your second consultation. Under 18s have a three-month cooling-off period and an independent psychological assessment.

How quickly could this realistically happen?

Several weeks from referral, most of it the mandatory waiting. Nobody should be offering you a date next week.

Can I check my surgeon's registration myself?

Yes - by name at ahpra.gov.au. It takes about a minute and is worth doing before any procedure, anywhere.

Related pages

See liposuction , flank and waistline liposuction , or liposuction costs .

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.