Liposuction Melbourne - Fat Removal and Body Contouring

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

Details:

Liposuction (also called liposculpture) is a surgical procedure that uses a thin tube, called a cannula, attached to a suction device to remove fat from localised areas of the body.

Liposuction is a body contouring procedure, not a method of weight loss. It removes localised fat deposits that have not responded to consistent exercise and a healthy diet. It can be performed alongside other procedures such as abdominoplasty .

We have offered liposuction since the early 1980s.

Start here: is this even the right operation?

Liposuction removes one thing — subcutaneous fat. Five quite different problems get mistaken for it, and each has a different answer. Work out which you have before anything else.

What you notice	What it probably is	What addresses it
A soft handful you can pinch and lift	Subcutaneous fat	Liposuction — the pages below
A firm, round abdomen you cannot grip	Visceral fat, behind the muscle wall	Not surgery — see liposuction vs weight loss surgery
A thin fold that lifts away like fabric and stays creased	Loose skin	Excision — tummy tuck , arm lift , thigh lift
A ridge down the middle of the abdomen that appears when you sit up	Separation of the abdominal muscles	Repair at abdominoplasty; physiotherapy first
Dimpling and orange-peel texture	Cellulite — fibrous tethering, not fat	Not liposuction — see thigh liposuction
Firm tissue behind the male nipple	Glandular tissue	Excision — gynaecomastia surgery

Most people have more than one of these, and the mix decides the plan. A surgeon who examines you standing and lying and tells you which is which is doing the assessment properly.

Areas that can be treated

Abdomen and flanks

Love handles (waistline)

Upper arms

Thighs , inner and outer

Back

Chin and neck , including double chin

Mons pubis

Male chest , in gynaecomastia

Outcomes vary depending on individual anatomy, skin quality and the area treated. Your surgeon will discuss whether you are a suitable candidate and what can reasonably be achieved in your case. Individual results may vary.

What counts as “one area”

Prices on this page and everywhere else are quoted per area, and this is where quotes stop being comparable between clinics. There is no universal definition of an area, so the same body can be described as one area at one practice and three at another.

Worth understanding before you compare figures:

The abdomen may be counted as one area or two — upper and lower abdomen are sometimes billed separately.

Flanks are usually paired , since treating one side alone produces asymmetry.

Inner and outer thighs are commonly quoted together , because they are blended into each other.

The back is often divided into upper back, bra line and lower back.

Left and right are not separate areas in most schemes — but confirm it.

Blending zones get treated whether or not they are billed. Contouring a flank without feathering into the back leaves a step, so the treated region is almost always larger than the named area.

So the useful question is not “how much per area?” but “how many areas is what I am asking for, on your definition, and what is the total?” Get the areas named in writing in the quote. A cheaper per-area price with more areas is not cheaper.

Liposuction techniques

Tumescent liposuction

The technique most commonly used at Me Clinic. A dilute local anaesthetic and adrenaline solution is infused into the treatment area before suction. The fluid makes the area swell and become firm, which helps the surgeon locate and extract fat deposits, and constricts blood vessels so less blood infiltrates the fat being removed.

This generally means less blood loss and less bruising than older techniques, a less invasive procedure and a shorter operating time.

Ultrasound (VASER)

VASER liposuction uses ultrasound energy to break down and liquefy fat cells so they are easier to extract. It allows more precise targeting of fat deposits.

Laser lipolysis

Uses laser energy to heat and melt the fat before extraction, while contracting collagen fibres with the aim of addressing loose skin.

Power-assisted liposuction

Uses a powered cannula that moves through the fat being aspirated, which can make extraction more efficient in some cases.

Which technique suits you depends on the area, the volume of fat and your skin quality. Your surgeon will discuss the options at consultation. The device name describes the energy source, not the result — the judgement about how much to take and where dominates the outcome.

What the procedure involves

Antibiotics and anaesthetic are administered to the area being contoured, deposited at regular intervals under the skin. With tumescent fluid the area swells and becomes firm and better defined.

A small incision is made in a discreet skin fold.

A sterile cannula is inserted through the incision into the numbed area.

The surgeon suctions out the targeted fat deposits and associated fluid.

The cannula is removed and the incision is sutured closed.

You are pressure bandaged or fitted with compression garments.

Depending on the extent of treatment and your circumstances, liposuction may be performed under local or general anaesthesia. Major surgery is performed under general anaesthesia at an accredited private hospital, and you may be required to stay overnight. Most liposuction cases are same-day procedures. See local or general anaesthesia .

Costs

Cost depends on the number of areas treated, the specific areas, the amount of fat to be removed, the time required in theatre, and your individual requirements. A consultation is needed for an accurate quote.

Surgeon’s fee guide, by number of areas:

One area of the body — $4,000 to $8,000

Two areas — $9,000 to $15,000

Three areas — $15,000 to $20,000+

Surgeon’s fee guide, by area:

Chin and neck — around $5,000

Abdomen (one area) — around $9,000

Inner and outer thighs — around $10,000

These are surgeon’s fee estimates only, and the final cost varies with where the procedure is performed. Me Clinic’s published pricing also quotes body, stomach and arm liposuction at $6,000 to $8,000 per hour of theatre time — a different basis of measurement to the per-area figures above. Your quote will set out which applies to your procedure.

As at September 2024 and including GST, a consultation with a Specialist Plastic Surgeon is $350 and a consultation with a Cosmetic Doctor is $150. See liposuction costs for the full breakdown.

What else affects the cost

Theatre and hospital fees — advised separately to the surgeon’s fee, and varying by facility. Usually charged at an hourly rate.

Anaesthetist fees — ranging from $800 to $1,200 per hour, with a single area generally requiring one to two hours. We use anaesthetists who are members of the Australian Society of Anaesthetists (ASA).

Post-operative care — included in the procedure fee.

Compression garments — fitted after the procedure to reduce swelling and assist recovery.

Payment for major surgery is due four weeks before the procedure. Independent medical finance companies are available.

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. See cosmetic surgery rule changes .

Medicare

Liposuction performed for cosmetic body contouring is not covered by Medicare. Where liposuction forms part of a medically necessary procedure — for example gynaecomastia surgery (MBS items 31525 and 31526) or excess skin removal after massive weight loss — a rebate may apply if the strict criteria are met and you have a valid GP referral. Confirm current item numbers on MBS Online. We are not a no-gap provider.

Recovery

You will need someone to drive you home and to stay with you for at least 24 hours after the procedure. Compression garments are required, and how long you wear them depends on the amount of fat removed and the area treated.

First two weeks. Avoid exercise. Gentle walking is encouraged.

Two to six weeks. Resume activity gradually. Most people return to work after two to three weeks.

Six weeks. Most people are back to their usual level of exercise.

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

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

Your surgeon will confirm what to expect in your case.

When you can judge the result

The single most common source of unnecessary distress after liposuction is looking too early. The pattern is the same in every area:

Days 1–3: swelling increases. You look bigger, not smaller.

Weeks 2–4: firm, lumpy and uneven under the skin, with numb patches. This is the stage people panic.

Weeks 6–8: most of the swelling has gone and a shape is emerging.

Three months: the first fair look.

Twelve months: the settled result, with lumpiness resolved and scars faded.

Do not make decisions about a revision before three months , and do not conclude an operation failed at week two.

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.

Risks include infection, bruising, swelling, pain, scarring, bleeding and haematoma, seroma, contour irregularity, changes in sensation from nerve damage, anaesthesia complications, and blood clots (DVT and pulmonary embolism).

Liposuction specifically can be traumatic for internal organs. Visceral perforation or puncture can occur when the surgical probe comes into contact with an internal organ, and repairing such an injury can require additional surgery. This is uncommon but is a recognised risk of the procedure.

Wherever an incision is made there will be a scar. A well-placed incision typically fades over time, though how a scar heals varies between individuals.

Call us for pain increasing rather than decreasing after day three, spreading redness or heat, fever, pus or odour, an incision opening, or one side swelling much more than the other. Seek urgent attention for sudden breathlessness or chest pain, a calf that becomes swollen hot and painful, severe abdominal pain, or confusion.

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

Where surgery is performed

Our surgeons operate at accredited private hospitals around Melbourne, including 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). Smaller procedures may be performed in clinic under local anaesthesia.

Where to read next

If you want	Read
The full cost breakdown	Liposuction costs
How the anaesthetic decision is made	Local or general
How to read the photographs	Before and after
The ultrasound-assisted technique	VASER
Smaller areas, awake, under local	Light touch
Whether you need weight loss instead	Liposuction vs bariatric surgery
Using your own fat to add volume elsewhere	Fat transfer
Loose skin on the arms	Arm lift

Common questions about liposuction

Is liposuction a weight loss procedure?

No. It is body contouring — removing localised fat deposits that have not responded to exercise and diet.

How do I know whether liposuction is the right operation?

By working out what the tissue is. A soft handful is subcutaneous fat; a firm abdomen you cannot grip is visceral; a thin fold that stays creased is loose skin; a ridge when you sit up is muscle separation; dimpling is cellulite; firm tissue behind a male nipple is gland.

Which areas can be treated?

Abdomen and flanks, love handles, upper arms, inner and outer thighs, back, chin and neck, mons pubis, and the male chest in gynaecomastia.

What counts as one area?

There is no universal definition, which is why quotes are hard to compare. The abdomen may be one area or two, flanks are usually paired, inner and outer thighs commonly go together, and the back is often divided.

How should I compare quotes then?

Ask how many areas your request is on their definition and what the total is, and get the areas named in writing. A cheaper per-area price with more areas is not cheaper.

What are the techniques?

Tumescent (the standard here), ultrasound-assisted VASER, laser lipolysis, and power-assisted liposuction.

Which technique is best?

It depends on the area, the volume and your skin quality. The device name describes the energy source, not the result.

What anaesthetic will I have?

Local or general depending on the extent. Major surgery is under general anaesthesia at an accredited private hospital, sometimes with an overnight stay; most cases are same-day.

What does it cost?

$4,000 to $8,000 for one area, $9,000 to $15,000 for two, $15,000 to $20,000+ for three — chin and neck around $5,000, abdomen around $9,000, inner and outer thighs around $10,000.

Why are there two different pricing bases?

Me Clinic's published pricing also quotes some liposuction at $6,000 to $8,000 per hour of theatre time. Your quote will set out which applies to your procedure.

What is additional to the surgeon's fee?

Theatre and hospital fees, anaesthetist fees of $800 to $1,200 per hour, and compression garments. Post-operative care is included in the procedure fee.

When is payment due?

Four weeks before the procedure for major surgery. Independent medical finance companies are available.

Does Medicare cover it?

Not for cosmetic contouring. A rebate may apply where liposuction forms part of a medically necessary procedure such as gynaecomastia surgery or excess skin removal after massive weight loss, with strict criteria and a valid referral.

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 after the second.

How long is recovery?

No exercise for two weeks, back to work at two to three weeks, usual exercise by about six weeks, domestic flights at around two weeks and international flights and swimming at six to eight.

Why do I look bigger afterwards?

Swelling increases for the first two to three days. You look bigger before you look smaller.

Is lumpiness at two weeks normal?

Yes. Firm, uneven areas and numb patches are normal for weeks and soften gradually. It is the stage people panic and the stage they need to least.

When can I judge the result?

Three months for a first fair look, twelve months for the settled result. Do not make decisions about revision before three months.

What are the main risks?

Infection, bruising, swelling, pain, scarring, bleeding and haematoma, seroma, contour irregularity, sensation change, anaesthesia complications, blood clots, and uncommonly visceral perforation.

Where do you operate?

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

What is liposuction?

Liposuction, also called liposculpture, is a surgical procedure that uses a thin tube called a cannula, attached to a suction device, to remove fat from localised areas of the body. It is surgery, performed under local or general anaesthesia.

What is liposuction for?

It is a body contouring procedure, not a method of weight loss. It removes localised fat deposits that have not responded to consistent exercise and a healthy diet, and it can be performed alongside other procedures such as abdominoplasty.

Which areas can be treated?

The abdomen and flanks, love handles at the waistline, upper arms, inner and outer thighs, the back, the chin and neck including a double chin, the mons pubis, and the male chest in gynaecomastia.

What results can I expect?

Outcomes vary depending on individual anatomy, skin quality and the area treated. Your surgeon will discuss whether you are a suitable candidate and what can reasonably be achieved in your case. Individual results may vary.

What anaesthesia is used?

Local or general anaesthesia, depending on the extent of treatment and your individual circumstances. Major surgery is performed under general anaesthesia at an accredited private hospital and may require an overnight stay. Most liposuction cases are same-day procedures.

How is the procedure performed?

Antibiotics and anaesthetic are administered to the area being contoured. A small incision is made in a discreet skin fold, a sterile cannula is inserted, and the targeted fat deposits and associated fluid are suctioned out. The incision is then sutured closed and you are pressure bandaged or fitted with compression garments.

What techniques does Me Clinic use?

Tumescent liposuction is the technique most commonly used. VASER uses ultrasound energy to break down and liquefy fat cells; laser lipolysis uses laser energy to melt fat while contracting collagen fibres; and power-assisted liposuction uses a powered cannula. Which technique suits you depends on the area, the volume of fat and your skin quality.

What are the risks?

All surgical procedures carry risks. These include infection, bruising, swelling, pain, scarring, bleeding and haematoma, seroma, contour irregularity, changes in sensation from nerve damage, anaesthesia complications, and blood clots including DVT and pulmonary embolism. Liposuction specifically can be traumatic for internal organs: visceral perforation or puncture is uncommon but is a recognised risk, and repairing such an injury can require additional surgery.

Will there be a scar?

Wherever an incision is made there will be a scar. A well-placed incision typically fades over time, though how a scar heals varies between individuals.

What does recovery involve?

You will need someone to drive you home and to stay with you for at least 24 hours. Compression garments are required, and how long you wear them depends on the amount of fat removed and the area treated. Avoid exercise for the first two weeks, with gentle walking encouraged. Most people return to work after two to three weeks and to their usual level of exercise by six weeks.

Do I need a referral?

Yes. Since 1 July 2023 all patients are required to have a GP referral before seeing a plastic surgeon or doctor about cosmetic surgery. There is also a compulsory one-week cooling-off period after your second consultation before surgery can be booked.

Is liposuction covered by Medicare?

Liposuction performed for cosmetic body contouring is not covered by Medicare. Where it forms part of a medically necessary procedure, such as gynaecomastia surgery under MBS items 31525 and 31526 or excess skin removal after massive weight loss, a rebate may apply if the strict criteria are met and you have a valid GP referral. Me Clinic is not a no-gap provider.

What does liposuction cost?

Cost depends on the number of areas treated, the specific areas, the amount of fat to be removed, the time required in theatre and your individual requirements, so a consultation is needed for an accurate quote. As a surgeon's fee guide, one area of the body is $4,000 to $8,000. Me Clinic's published pricing also quotes some liposuction per hour of theatre time, and your quote will set out which basis applies to your procedure. Theatre, hospital and anaesthetist fees are advised separately.

Where is the surgery performed?

At accredited private hospitals around Melbourne, including Masada Private Hospital in St Kilda East, Epworth Geelong at Waurn Ponds, St Vincent's Werribee, Sir John Monash Private Hospital in Clayton, Peninsula Private Hospital in Langwarrin and Linacre Private Hospital in Hampton. Smaller procedures may be performed in clinic under local anaesthesia.

Should I get a second opinion?

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