

## Liposuction for Lipedema 101: What to Expect

### **1. How long can should I expect swelling to last?**

It is NORMAL to experience significant swelling from this procedure. You should see a significant reduction in your swelling around 3 to 4 weeks post-op, although it may take 6 to 8 weeks to feel like you are back to your normal self. Due to a longer projected recovery time than many other cosmetic procedures, it is imperative that you are prepared for the post-op period and understand how to care for yourself during this time.

### **2. What kind of compression garment will I wear post-op?**

When you wake up from surgery, you will be in your custom fit compression garment provided by Ditesheim Cosmetic Surgery. For patients that are treating the lower extremities, this garment is specially designed to go over the ankle and heel. This is designed so as to not create a tourniquet effect at the ankle and control swelling all the way through the foot. Patients that are treating the arms will wear compression sleeves. They are designed to have two separate arms that fasten in the back.

Compression therapy is very important for this procedure. We advise you to wear your garment(s) for the first 3-4 weeks post-surgery. You should be in your garment whenever you are not taking a shower or using your Lympha Press. Some patients will choose to continue wearing compression after the 3-4 week interval, but may switch to a compressive legging rather than a post-surgical garment. We encourage you to do what is most comfortable for you.

### **3. What can I do in the post-operative period to help reduce swelling and discomfort?**

We STRONGLY encourage every patient treated for Lipedema to purchase a Lympha Press. This can be purchased online. The Lympha Press provides sequential compression using a garment filled with air chambers. Essentially, it performs lymphatic massage in the comfort of your own home. It is advised to use your Lympha Press at least 3 times a day for 30 minutes in the early recovery stages (first 2-3 weeks). This will help to encourage lymphatic flow and reduce inflammation.

- [Leg Massager from Amazon](#)
- [Lymphedema Leg Garment for Lymphatic Massage](#)

Lymphatic massage can greatly help speed along your recovery and reduce inflammation. You should seek out a Lymphedema clinic in your area. These therapists are highly skilled in treating patients diagnosed with Lipedema and Lymphedema. If there is not a Lymphedema clinic in your area, a massage therapist trained in Lymphatic massage is a great alternative. 2 to 3 massages per week for the first 3 to 4 weeks is advised, although if you feel like your legs/arms are too tender in the first week, it is okay to start lymphatic massage on week 2 post-op. We encourage you to organize your massages BEFORE surgery.

\*Our clinical staff can provide referrals for Lymphatic massage depending on where you live\*

Cold therapy is also strongly advised in helping reduce inflammation and discomfort. You should purchase 2 gel ice packs—1 per leg. You should ice the affected areas for 20 minutes, then take a break for 20 minutes. Icing as much as possible during the first 2-3 weeks will help you in your recovery.

- [Gel Ice Pack](#)

You can also soak your legs in an Epsom salt bath. Fill your tub with warm water to submerge your legs (water should not be too hot, as you may have some residual numbness from surgery and we want to avoid burns) and pour a liberal amount of Epsom salt in the tub. Patients describe this to be very soothing.

Other suggestions from previous patients:

- Sit in the shower and let the warm water run over your legs.
- Keep your legs elevated when sitting/lying down.
- Dry brushing to encourage lymphatic flow.

#### **4. Will the Lipedema fat come back?**

Once the fat cells are removed with Liposuction, they will not come back. Once you are recovered from your procedure, you should experience an improvement in your symptoms previously caused by the Lipedema fatty tissue.

Some patients have expressed noticing more fatty deposits in other areas of the body affected by Lipedema, like the arms, if they were not treated with Liposuction. Other areas of discomfort can be treated in a second stage procedure.

## **5. How can I be certain that this surgery is safe for me?**

All surgical procedures involve some degree of risk. Dr. Ditesheim and his clinical team take your safety very seriously. We will assess the risk of the surgery, as well as the intrinsic risk that you hold as the patient. Depending on your age, health status, and pre-existing conditions, we may ask for you to obtain medical clearance and/or labwork from your primary doctor. We may also request a Duplex scan, which checks for patency of the deep veins in your lower extremities. This is all in efforts to make sure you are safe to undergo this procedure.

Depending on your hemoglobin level, Dr. Ditesheim can safely remove up to 10 pounds of fatty tissue. It is important to understand that if more than 10 pounds needs to be removed to achieve your desired result, a secondary procedure will be necessary. Dr. Ditesheim and his clinical team will help guide you to know when you are physically ready and safe to undergo a second procedure.