

Contact: KMR Communications, Inc.
P: 212.213.6444
F: 212.213.4699
info@kmrcommunications.com



BELT LIPECTOMY: The Final Frontier In Figure Reshaping

New York, NY Sept 27, 2002 - Millions of Americans are unhappy with their body shape/figure. Whether it is a case of bad genetics, the traumatic effect significant weight loss has caused, or just an abundance of loose skin on the abdomen or thighs, people are generally unhappy when they gaze into the mirror. **Dr. Al Aly and Dr. Albert Cram, Plastic Surgeons with The University of Iowa** can help with the "**Belt Lipectomy**" procedure, which is much like a facelift for the body. It is designed to assist people who suffer from sagging abdomens, buttocks and inner/outer thighs. As Dr. Aly explains, "With increasing age or with weight loss there is often an excess of skin and or fatty tissue. In mild cases, this can be managed by procedures such as a tummy tuck or liposuction. However, in more significant excess situations, especially where the excess is circumferential in nature around the belly, hips, back, buttocks, and outer thighs, this more extensive procedure is required.

There are three groups of patients that are good candidates for belt lipectomy:

1. The first group is composed of women that have a mild amount of excess in the belly, hips, thighs and a sagging buttocks. These changes are common in the mid thirty to forty year old group. They are associated with early aging, often secondary to changes that occur after child bearing. While others might feel the changes are mild, these patients want to reverse the ravages of age and child rearing on their bodies.
2. The second group of patients are those with moderate excess of the trunk. Many of these patients have attempted for years to loose the excess 30 to 40 pounds but are unable to. A traditional tummy tuck procedure in this group will often lead to less than ideal results, especially in the hip, flank, and buttocks areas. Their anatomy requires belt lipectomy to attain a striking improvement in their truncal contour.
3. The third group of patients are those who have had a significant amount of weight loss due to gastric bypass surgery, intestinal bypass surgery or a dramatic change in eating and exercise habits. They often have had more than one hundred pounds of weight loss when they present. They typically will have hanging skin and fat in the area of the abdomen, outer thigh excess, hip excess that may hang, back rolls, and ill defined buttocks. They often will have massive hanging skin and fat from the chin down to the knees. Many of these patients are disheartened when they come to see the plastic surgeon. They have worked hard to loose all of the weight, but still cannot wear normal clothing because the hanging skin robs them of a normal contour. Many of these patients will need staged procedures on the arms, inner thighs, breasts, and back in addition to the belt lipectomy.

Two operating teams perform the three to six hour surgery with one board-certified plastic surgeon leading each team, operating simultaneously. Although the surgical sequence varies depending on the needs of each patient, Dr. Aly will usually treat the belly first, by removing the excess skin from the belly button down to the pubic area. The belly button is cut out from the surrounding skin and left in place. The abdominal wall muscle, which is deep to the skin and fat of the belly, is then tightened. In most patients this layer is loose due to pregnancy and or excess weight that has been lost. The fat and skin above the belly button is then stretched down to the pubic area and sutured in place. A new opening is made to allow the belly button to be brought through, in its original position. The wound is then closed. The patient is then turned to the side and the excess skin and fat from the side to the mid back is removed. Most patients require liposuction of the outer thighs. This part of the operation reduces the protrusion of the outer thighs but also lifts the skin of the whole leg down to the knee. As

the skin and fat is removed from the back area the back rolls are reduced and the buttocks are lifted. Of course each of these maneuvers is done to a different degree depending on the needs of the patient.

Dr. Aly explains that, "All patients are required to stay in the hospital one night and preferably two. The immediate postoperative period is very critical since there is potential for having the wound open up if there is too much stretch put on it. Because there is tension on both the back and the front of the patient, it is critical that the patient is not moved till they are completely awake. They are then able to sense the stretch caused by movement, and thus can now protect their wounds. All patients have a number of drains, which are plastic tubes left under the skin and fat to collect tissue fluid and blood, left in place for 1 to 2 weeks." The patients are expected to get up and walk the first night of surgery and their activity is slowly advanced over the next few days. Many patients experience discomfort requiring strong pain medication over the first few days after surgery. They have to walk in a slightly bent position for a week, at which point they are allowed to start maneuvers to straighten up. Most patients are back to their daily activities in 4 weeks.

When the final results are evident, there is a considerable improvement in patient truncal contour after belt lipectomy. The abdomen is flatter, the waist has better definition, the hips are less protuberant, the back rolls are greatly improved and the buttocks are smaller and better shaped.

As Dr. Aly explains, "Some patients are not good candidates for the procedure. If the patient is massively obese he or she is not a candidate for this procedure, because it will not improve contour and they may not heal their wounds. Patients who have medical problems that preclude them from undergoing general anesthetic are also not considered." Smoking causes a significant decrease in blood supply to all tissues of the body, thus smokers are not candidates for belt lipectomy because of the increased risk of tissue loss associated with the surgical procedure. Patients who are deemed mentally unable to handle an extensive surgical procedure with its concomitant recovery period may not be good candidates and may require counseling and or antidepressant therapy prior to being reconsidered for the procedure.

In all cases Dr. Aly obtains a general medical history prior to surgery. This is necessary to ensure that he or she can tolerate the anesthetic and surgical stress involved. A good history on weight and contour changes that the patient has experienced is taken. In some cases if the patient is capable of losing more weight, it is wise to delay the procedure till they have reached their maximal weight loss to insure the best results.

Dr. Aly is careful to point out that, "As with any surgical procedure there are possible risks and complications. The complications that are associated with any surgical procedure include infection and bleeding. This procedure has specific risks, which include seroma formation, a fluid accumulation in the areas of the back mostly. This is usually treated by repeated needle aspirations. Wound separation is another possible risk and careful postoperative management of the patient best avoids it. Deep vein thrombosis, or blood clot formation in the legs after surgery, can lead to pulmonary embolus, which is a blood clot that travels to the lungs. This is a dangerous complication and every attempt is made to prevent its occurrence. This involves making sure the patient walks as soon as possible after surgery as possible."

Dr. Aly points out that, "The Belt Lipectomy Procedure is not a simple operation and is not offered by many plastic surgeons nationwide. It is an operation that requires both the skill of the surgeon and the cooperation of the patient who must understand that this can be an arduous process."

###

For additional information, to schedule an interview or to request products, please contact KMR Communications, Inc. at 212.213.6444, or info@kmrcommunications.com. KMR Communications, Inc. is a vital communications resource, fulfilling the interview of the news media with experts from the medical, fitness and beauty industry.