

## **LIPOSUCTION RECOVERY**

*"She's like a dream, wrapped in a wish, poured into jeggings."*  
—Manny, on "Modern Family" TV Show

Your body, goals, and choice of treatments are unique and important to your self-esteem and your confidence. You are considering or scheduling a liposuction procedure with SSK either alone or to accompany one or more other procedures, such as a breast reduction, an arm lift, or a Mommy Makeover. Reminder: Liposuction is not a weight-loss solution, but it is a safe and effective way to remove fat and cellulite. Confident in doing our best and in achieving excellent results from many years of practice, my staff and I are honored to serve your cosmetic surgery needs with the finest attention, technique, and follow-up care. Please read and later refer to the following information.

### **YOUR TAILORED PROCEDURE AND RECOVERY**

#### **Anesthesia:**

Your surgery most likely will be under general anesthesia, intravenous sedation, or local anesthesia. During the procedure, we do everything we can to minimize bleeding, bruising, and swelling with gentle tissue handling, meticulous hemostasis, good blood pressure control, and a combination of many other proven strategies so that you can be presentable and back to your normal activities ASAP. Part of your recovery will be based on the type of sedation that we use and on your usual reactions to anesthesia.

#### **After Surgery, in the Recovery Unit:**

When you are fully awake, our staff will review with you your post-operative care instructions that we discussed prior to surgery. We use simple, light, easy-care dressings and comfortable compression support garments; they will keep your surgical sites covered and closed during the early stage of healing (for a few weeks) while also controlling swelling. Instructions will include appropriate clothing to wear and the duration of restrictions, other details about your postsurgical care, normal symptoms you will experience, and potential signs of complication to watch for.

When you are well enough for your driver to take you home, we intend you to have little to worry about so that you can start to enjoy the optimized results to your body while you recover.

*Outpatient:* Most liposuction procedures, when not too numerous and not with other, major procedures, are outpatient. You must have someone stay with you, especially overnight, because the anesthetic can affect you for the next 24 hours. Either I or a member of our staff will call later to check on you.

*Inpatient:* Depending on co-morbidities, distance from the hospital, the extent of the procedure(s), and whether you are experiencing any unusual reactions, you may need to be admitted for a 23-hour hospital stay in a room. I will visit you the next day.

### **Help/Support at Home:**

**It is important to keep your arrangement of having someone to stay with you** in order to help with your care and with your family's needs at least overnight, depending on the extent of your surgery and your situation at home. If you have also had another procedure as part of a **Mommy Makeover**, you will need a helper to stay with you and your family for up to a week. Having help is crucial to your recovery. If the plan you scheduled falls through, call us right away; we can arrange for a private-duty nurse or a trained companion to care for you at your expense. I or a member of my staff will call later to check on you.

### **Medications & Bandages:**

Over-the-counter oral pain relievers should keep you comfortable. If necessary, I may prescribe a stronger pain medication. If you experience extreme or long-lasting pain, allergic reactions, or other unusual symptoms, call us without undue delay. If I prescribe an oral antibiotic for you, be sure to take it as prescribed and for the full period. When you change your bandages, following the instructions you were given, carefully check your incisions and remember to be patient as they heal.

### **Sleep/Rest:**

Please sleep in comfortable positions without putting pressure on your wounds.

**Smoking:** Please do NOT smoke or use nicotine patches/gums 2 weeks before and 2 weeks after your procedure. Smoking interferes with healing and downgrades your health in general. Otherwise, nonsurgical options for fat removal are available for patients who are not good candidates for liposuction.

### **Showering vs. Bathing:**

You will be allowed to shower the next day and even get your incision wet, but I prefer that my patients not submerge their incisions in water (such as in a bathtub, pool, hot tub, or ocean) for at least a week while their wounds are healing.

### **Clothing:**

Besides wearing the special compression support garments for 6-8 weeks for optimal healing, you should continue to dress as you did on your surgery day: soft, loose, comfortable clothing that goes on and comes off easily without unduly activating or pressing on your surgical areas: tops and sweaters that open in the front, probably roomy elastic-waist pants, and slip-on shoes--so that you won't have to bend over or excessively activate your sore spots.

### **Compression Garment/Abdominal Binder:**

**Your compression garment must stay on for 24/7 for the first few weeks** to limit swelling, keep wounds positioned, and prevent fluid from accumulating; it helps significantly to promote healing. You should not have any problems with going to the bathroom while wearing this and can remove for showering and other hygiene maintenance. In many cases it's best to have at least 1 more available of each garment, clean/dry, and ready to put on in case the first one gets wet or stained.

### **Beverages & Foods:**

Please stay hydrated, preferably with water, before and after surgery for a safe recovery. Limit alcoholic beverages to no more than 2-3 weekly. You should have prepared for your post-surgical recovery by buying lots of bottled water if you need it, along with low-sodium/caffeine-free/high-protein beverages and foods, whole grains, and fresh fruits and veggies; avoid processed and sugary products.

**Activities:**

For the first 2 days, you should rest most of the time and catch up on reading and watching movies/TV. DO NOT try to take care of someone else; this is your time for someone to take care of you. Walking is permitted to promote healthful circulation of oxygen and blood throughout your body (to prevent blood clots) while you recover, even on the first day and over the next month, when you will need to avoid strenuous activities. You may do light activities by Day 2.

**Strenuous Activities: Reaching, Lifting, Pushing, Pulling, Exercising, Sports:** I must restrict you for 4 weeks on average to avoid strenuous activities. For the first few days, you may benefit from storing all the supplies you will need where you can easily reach them (at counter level when you are standing and at coffee-table/side-table level when you are resting). If possible, have a speakerphone close by and remote controls for the TV and other electronics. Depending on the location of your wounds, the number of procedures we did at once and the extent of surgery, you may need to avoid bending over; reaching far across, high, or low; lifting, pushing, or pulling anything over 10 pounds, including your young children, for 3-4 weeks. After that, you may ease back into most of your typical daily and workout activities.

**Sexual Activity:** Gentle sexual activity will be okay when you feel comfortable and ready.

**Driving:** You should not drive for a few days due to residual anesthesia and post-op discomfort. If you had several and extensive procedures time, you won't drive for up to 4 weeks. You may not drive while still needing to take narcotic pain medications.

**Laundry, Cleaning:** Do NOT do laundry or cleaning for 3-4 weeks if your surgery was complex and extensive (such as liposuction as part of a tummy tuck and a **Mommy Makeover**).

**Return to Job:** You may be able to return to work and to light activities in about a week, or even less, depending on the extent of your procedure(s) and the physical demands of your job, your recovery progress, and your comfort level. You likely may resume most regular, non-strenuous activities by the end of 2 weeks.

**Travel by Automobile & Airplane:** The longer you sit, the more opportunity life-threatening blood clots will have to form. If you must travel, do so only after I have given permission after evaluating your post-surgical condition—only for a couple of hours with brief walking hourly.

**Follow-Up:**

We will see you in my Orange County Plastic Surgery office usually 1 week later for your first follow-up appointment. We will remove your light dressing and continue to monitor your progress, symptoms, sutures as they dissolve over time, and associated overall health at regular intervals to make sure your healing is going as planned. Be gentle with your self-care for the next weeks and months as you recover and your slimmer, more-toned contours begin to show the benefits of SSK's best techniques for you.

**GENERAL ADDITIONAL RECOVERY INFORMATION:**

**Pain, Soreness, Numbness, Stiffness:**

Very-minor procedures (surgical/nonsurgical) normally produce little discomfort. We often control pain easily with oral medications. You can expect numbness or tingling around your incisions that should decrease and may or may not resolve, depending on your pre-surgical sensitivity level and which procedure you've had done. Deep pressure sensation recovers more easily than fine-point discrimination. Minor stiffness at the site can be normal for a few days.

**Swelling, Bruising, Redness, Seepage:**

Your sites will naturally seep to eliminate fluid from around your wounds, which is a good thing. Through meticulous technique and gentle tissue handling, our goal has been to create minimal, if any, bruising, swelling, and discomfort. Certain other factors determine how much bruising takes place, such as the complexity or amount of surgery, the surgical sites (areas with thinner skin bruise more easily than thick areas), and your genetics (if you bruise more easily than your friends, you might bruise more than they do with surgery). Inflammation and swelling is normal in healing and varies in duration, depending on your procedure(s). For most procedures, patients are presentable from 2-14 days. Results are aided by the consistent use of a high-level sunblock (at least 30 SPF). A little redness around your incision can be normal during the first week.

**Sutures/Incisions, Scarring:**

Most of your sutures are dissolvable and working on the inside, helping to support your closure over 2-6 months; to seal the skin edges we use either skin glue or ster-strips (fine skin tape applied over incisions), which usually fall off on their own. Most plastic surgery closures are designed to be tension free and are layered to prevent unsightly scars that wide. On outside layers, these are normally placed into natural skin folds and creases, or in other locations where they are best concealed. The deeper-layer sutures that I use do not need to be taken out because they are absorbable and support your wound for 2-6 months, during the most-critical phases of wound remodeling. Scarring usually fades significantly over time.

**When to Call Us:**

Please examine your surgical sites whenever you change the bandages. Call us without delay if you see a fiery redness, abnormal bleeding, seepage/pus (infection), excessive swelling, or pulled stitches, pulled sutures, or immediate dramatic scarring, and if you have allergic reactions or other unusual symptoms, especially with intense and long-lasting pain.

**Recovery Time: On Average 4-8 Weeks**

Patience is key. Patients have different procedures and different healing processes/rates. The extent and complexity of your procedure will correlate with your recovery time. We will again discuss with you, and your loved one or friend, the specific do's and don'ts for your ideal recovery. Your recovery time and your amount of bruising, swelling, and possible, temporary numbness will depend on numerous factors but tends to average 4-8 weeks. Those factors include the number of treatment sites and whether I have also just done a nearby procedure such as an arm lift, a tummy tuck, a neck lift, or a breast reduction. You shouldn't expect to bounce right back from a procedure such as this, but you can feel assured that your results will show the benefits of SSK's **Orange County liposuction** technique. Before long, you can feel much more comfortable in your own skin and confident enough to wear whatever makes you feel pretty!

**Final Results: Average: 1-6 Months**

For the next several months, the elastin in your skin will keep contracting and adjusting to the removal of fat that has taken place. Final results should show your trimmer contours in 1-6 months and can be long-lasting if you follow a consistent program of a healthful diet and appropriate exercise.

**Other Medical Procedures:** *Additional Liposuction Procedures:* The body needs time to recover and regain strength between surgical procedures in order to reduce the risks of excessive bleeding, blood clots, infections, and skin degradation; I recommend intervals of 3 or 4 weeks for optimum outcomes.

I would be honored to have earned your trust and your approval in compassionate, skilled care--before, during, and after the best liposuction procedure Orange County has to offer. Please enjoy your natural-looking improved shape, your more-proportionate appearance in your clothes, and feeling complete and more confident. As your Orange County Plastic Surgeon, my goals are always to place your safety, satisfaction, and care as my top priority to help in rendering a better quality of life for you.

**After You Recover:**

To maximize your safety and your attractive, healthy outcome, please remember to follow through on prescribed periodic evaluations with me. Also, call and come in if you notice unexpected changes or pain. Remember: At our **Orange County Plastic Surgery** practice, you're a member of our extended family of patients and welcome with us after your procedure whether just to say hi or to have questions answered. By the way, if we've assisted you via a Bridalplasty, we wish you a long and happy marriage.