

# **FDRS 2024**

## **Lipedema Surgery Complications: What to Expect, What to Do**

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**FAT DISORDERS**  
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# DISCLOSURES

**Nothing to disclose**



# Three Types of Surgeons Who Can Say They Don't Cause Any Complications



Surgeons who  
don't operate

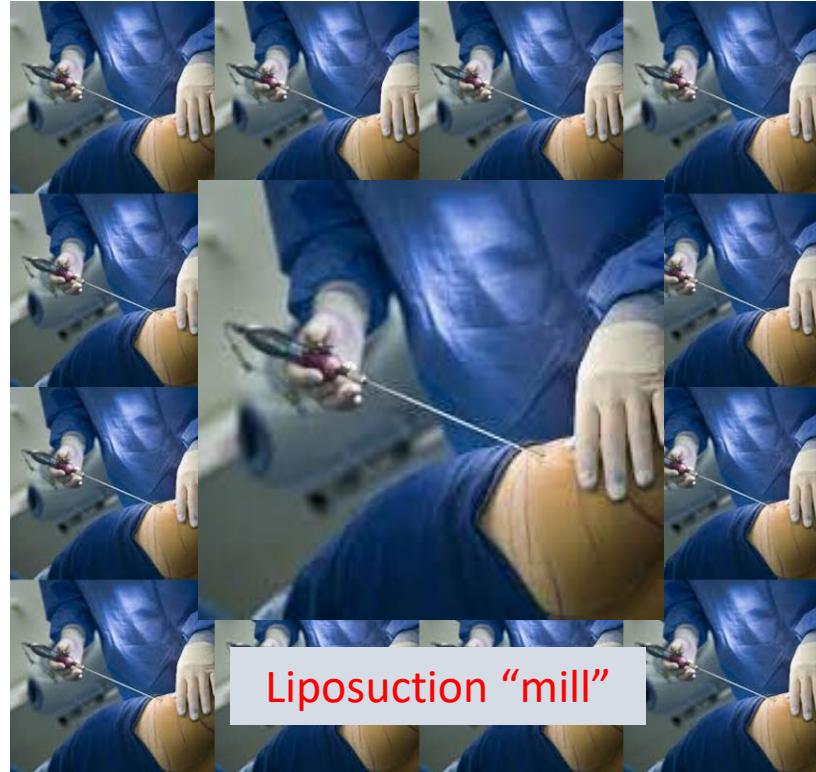




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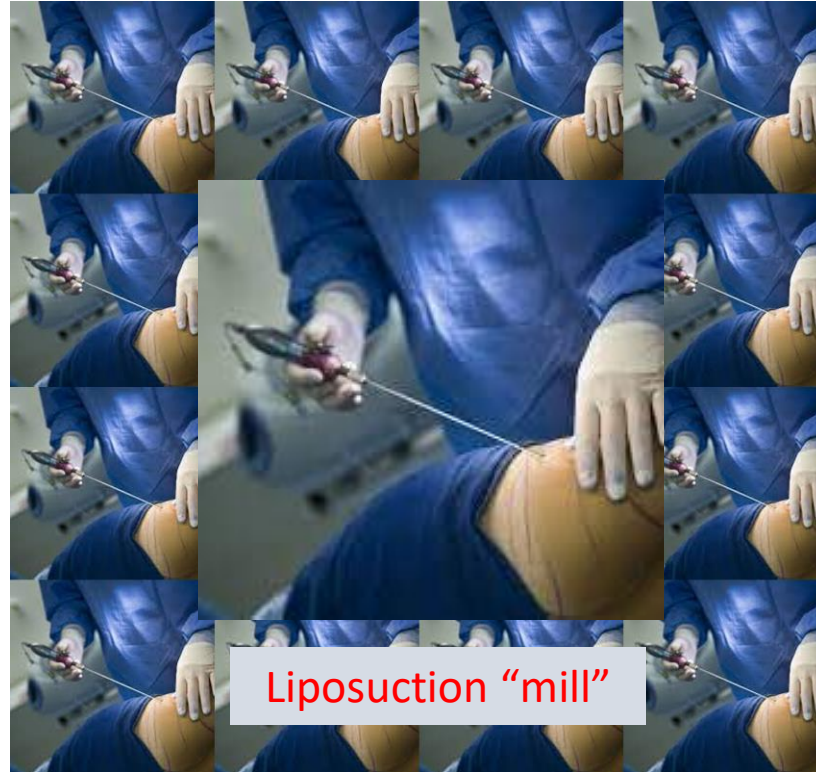


Surgeons who don't see patients after surgery

# Three Types of Surgeons Who Can Say They Don't Cause Any Complications



Surgeons who don't operate



Surgeons who don't see patients after surgery



Surgeons who lie

# Objectives

- **Not every unfavorable result after liposuction is a **complication****
  - **Some things are expected (loose skin)**
- **Accept that unfavorable results & complications can happen**
- **Understand the risks**
- **Identify risk factors**
- **Implement interventions to reduce risk**





# Liposuction Anesthesia

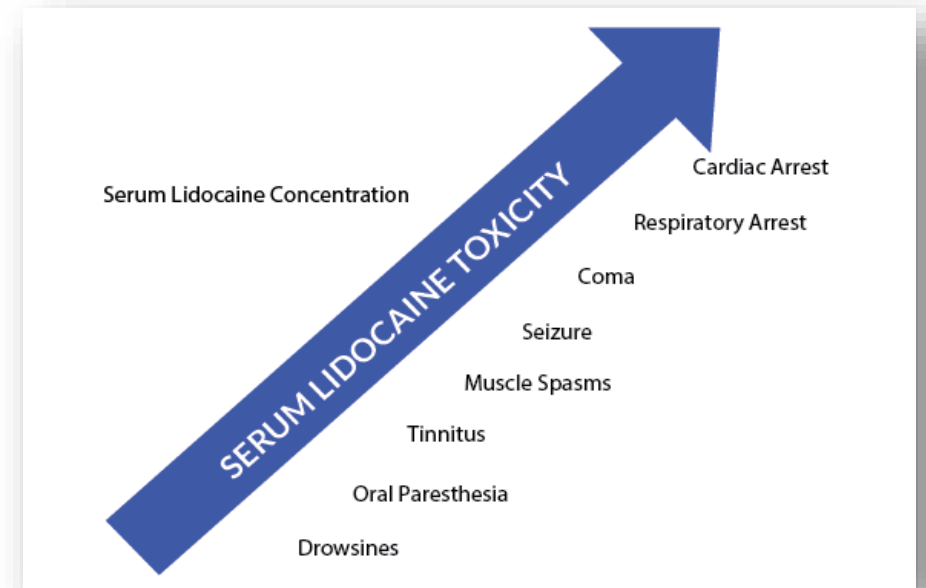
- **Awake + local anesthetic in tumescent fluid**
- **Sedation anesthesia**
  - + local anesthetic in tumescent fluid
- **General anesthesia**
  - +/- local anesthetic in tumescent fluid

**All have risks and benefits**



# Local Anesthetic Systemic Toxicity

- There are limits on how much can be done awake
- Lidocaine toxicity
  - During procedure
  - 10 to 14 hours after procedure
- Metallic taste, mouth numbness
- Confusion, seizure, death
- Don't treat too many areas at once while awake
- Some anti-depressants trigger this
- Surgeon needs to have treatment in facility





# Hemorrhage (Bleeding)

- May occur during surgery
  - Surgeon may stop the procedure
- More likely with 24 hours after surgery
  - More than just normal oozing after liposuction
  - May require blood products (transfusions)
  - Interventional radiology if bleeding continues
- **Risk Factors: Personal/family history of bleeding problems**
- **Risk Reduction: Avoid certain medications & supplements, consider blood product supplementation, Tranexamic Acid**



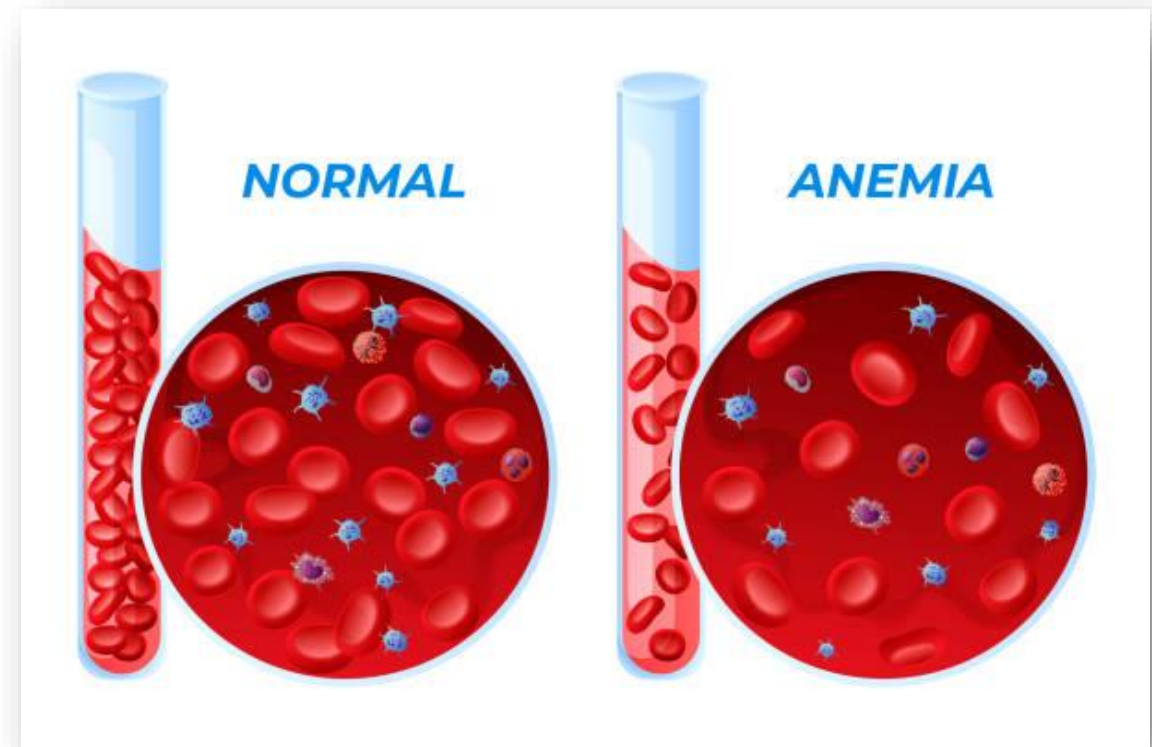
# Hematoma (Blood Collection Under Skin)

- **Within 7 days after surgery**
- **Swelling with bruising under skin**
- **Easy to drain with a needle**
  - May require a drain
- **If not treated**
  - Infection, fibrosis, skin injury, wounds
  - **Risk Factors: Personal/family history of bleeding problems**
- **Risk Reduction: Avoid certain medications & supplements, consider blood product supplementation, Tranexamic Acid**



# Anemia (Low Blood Counts after Surgery)

- Fatigue, lightheaded, weak
- Check Hemoglobin before surgery
- **Proper nutrition**
- **Iron, Vitamins**
- **Limit areas of treatment**
- **Rare to need transfusion**



# Dehydration

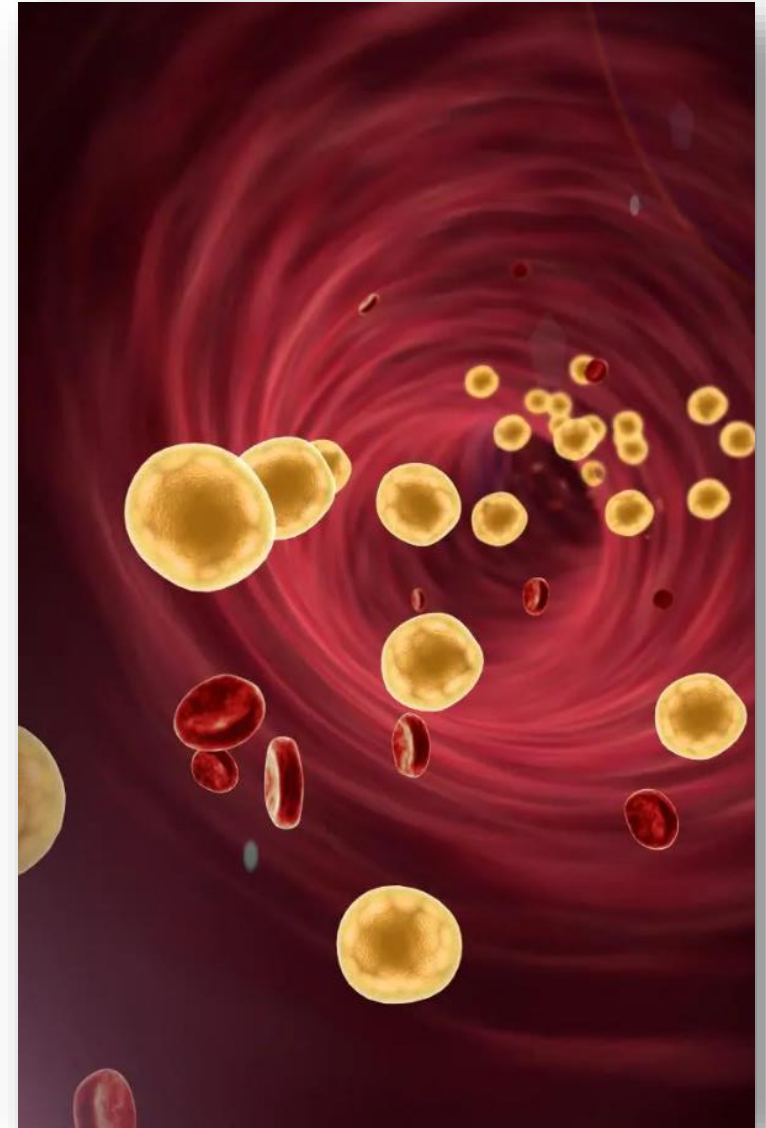
- **Fluid replaces removed fat**
  - Moves from blood to liposuctioned tissue
  - You may be swollen but dehydrated
- **Lightheaded, dizzy, thirsty**
- **More likely with high volume liposuction**
- **Drink fluids/sports drinks**
- **Watch for dark urine**
- **May need IV fluids**





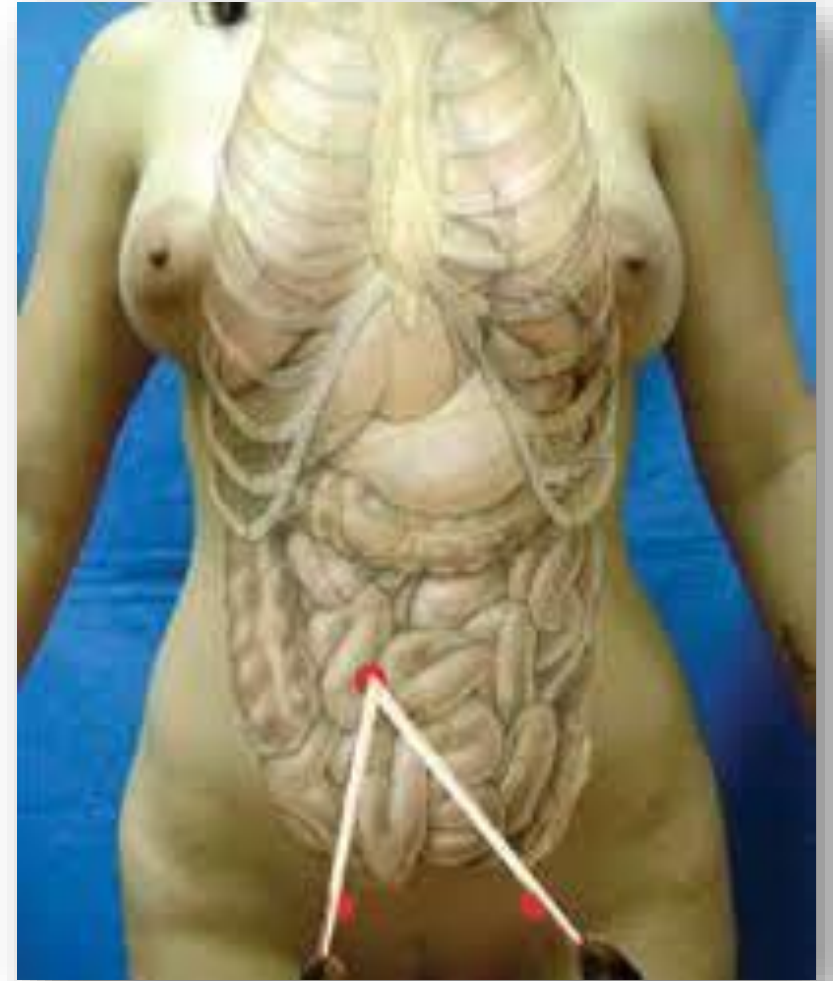
# Fat Embolism Syndrome

- **Small particles of fat in blood stream**
- **Systemic inflammation**
- **Symptoms 1 to 2 days after liposuction**
  - Shortness of breath
  - Racing heart rate
  - Mental status changes
  - Rash
- **Increase hydration**
- **An emergency – call your surgeon**



# Injury to Internal Organs

- Typically with trunk liposuction
- Very rare
- Serious consequences
- **Notify surgeon if not recovering as expected in the first week**



# Infection

- **Antibiotics during surgery**
  - **Not needed after**
- **Rare after liposuction**
- **Fever, chills**
- **Redness, swelling**
- **Tenderness, pain**
- **Antibiotics**
  - **May require IV if severe**



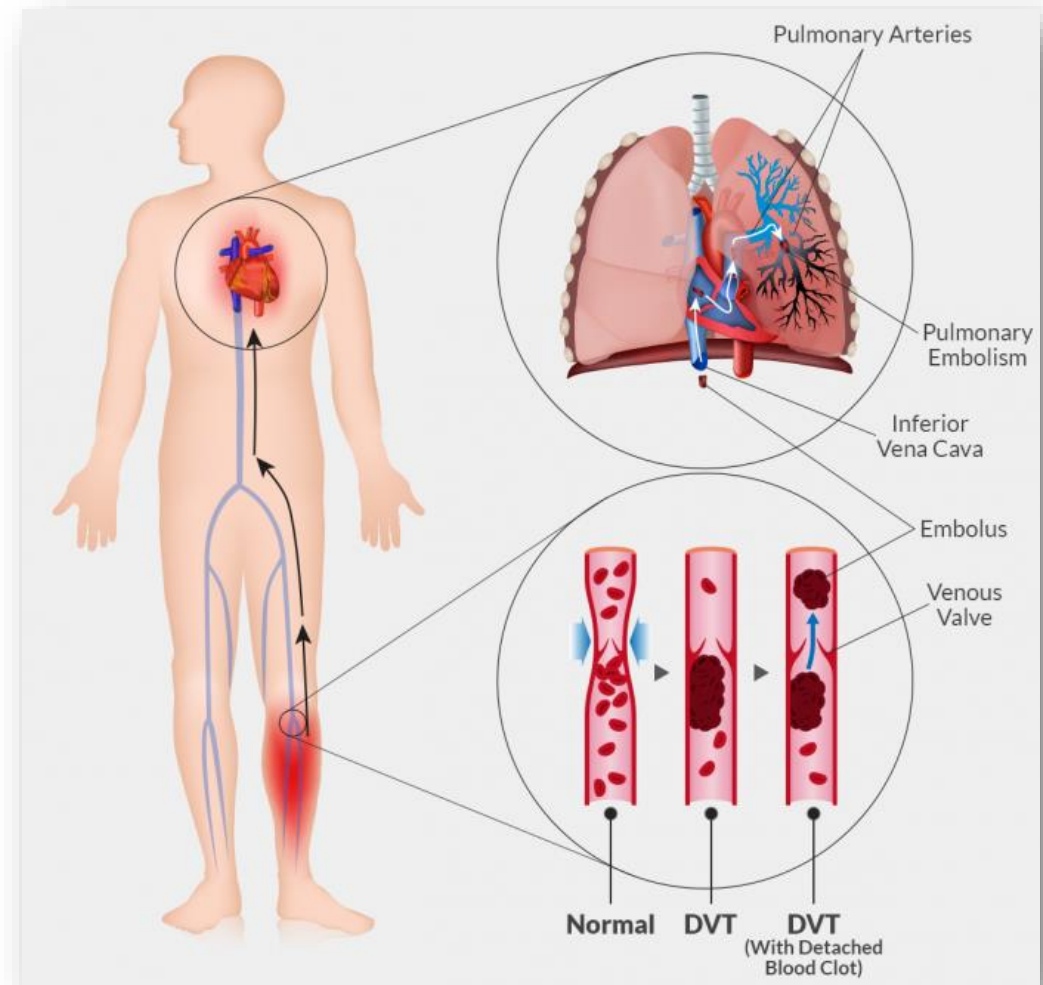
# Blood Clots

## Deep Venous Thrombosis (DVT)

- One sided leg swelling

## Pulmonary Embolism

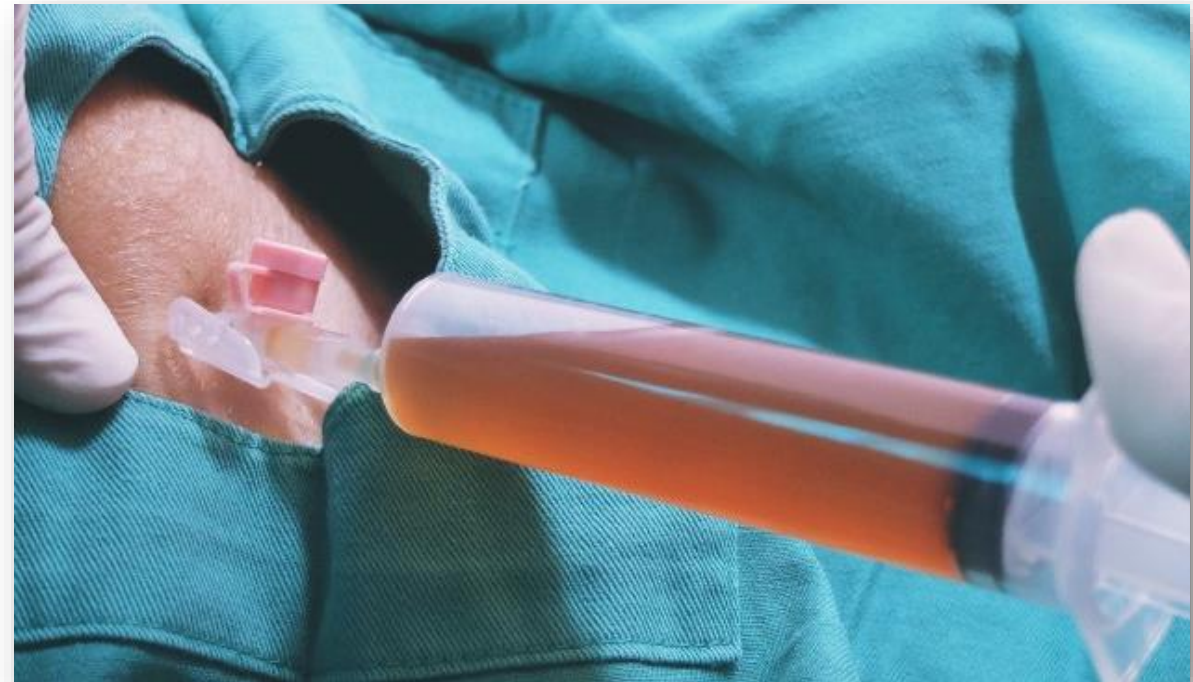
- Shortness of breath, dizziness
- Emergency
  
- **Early walking, don't stay in bed**
- **Blood thinners in some cases**





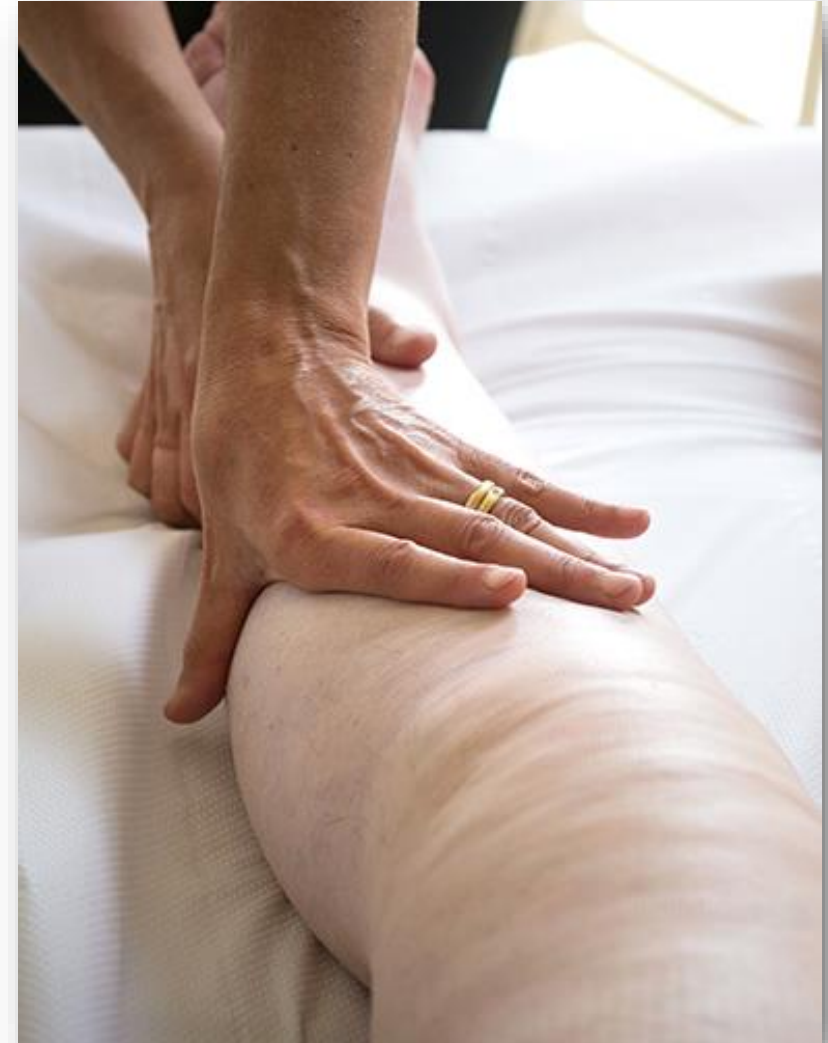
# Seroma (Fluid Collection Under Skin)

- Up to 4 weeks after surgery
- “Fluid wave” moving under skin
- Easy to drain in office
- May require a drain
- If not treated
  - Infection, internal scars
  - Surgery to remove
- **Proper compression**
- **Watch for localized swelling**



# Fibrosis (Internal Scar Tissue)

- Swelling is normal after surgery
- Uncontrolled swelling → firm scar tissue
- More common in lower body
- May result from untreated seroma
- **Proper compression**
- **MLD**
- **Physical therapy modalities**



# Skin Ulcers/Wounds

- Rare
- Poor circulation
- “Aggressive” liposuction
- Prolonged pressure
- Too much compression
- **Avoid pressure**
- **Proper garment fit**
- **Check your surgery sites**



# Numbness or Hypersensitivity

- **Some numbness is normal**
  - Resolves in weeks to months
- **Increased sensitivity**
  - Usually resolves
  - Treat if not improving or severe
    - **Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS)**
- **Early PT & desensitization**





# Scars

- All incisions result in scars
- Hyperpigmentation
  - More common in dark skin
- Hypertrophic
  - Tend to improve with time
- Reduce risk with
  - Sunblock
  - Silicone gel
- Treatment: steroid injections, lasers, revision



# Hemosiderin Staining

- **Brownish discoloration after bruising**
- **May be permanent**
- **Difficult to treat**
  - **Lasers**



# Firm Lumps Under Skin

## Fat necrosis

- Steroid injections
- Excision

## Cysts

- Needle drainage
- Excision

## Lipedema nodules

- Excision



# Persistent Swelling or Lipedema

## Persistent Lipedema

- Can't remove all the fat
- Some may return – usually insignificant
- Can do “touch up” liposuction

## Mild lymphedema

- Need for compression



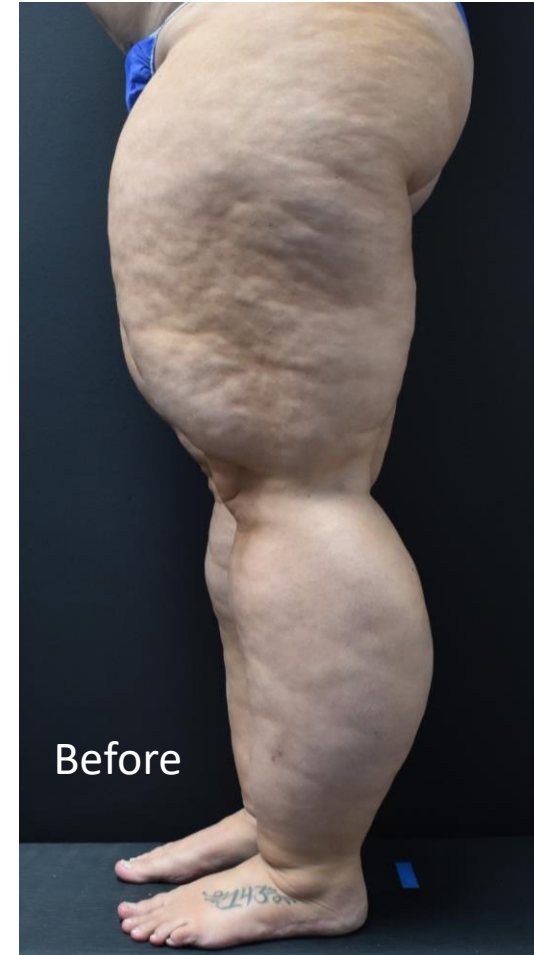


# Loose or Irregular Skin

- **Not a complication if**
  - Large volume removed
  - Loose skin to start
- **Realistic expectations**
  - Trade off between fat removal
- **Be prepared for loose skin removal**
- **There are no magic skin tightening machines\***



# Combined **Liposuction & Skin Excision** if Loose Skin Predicted



# How to Reduce Risk

- **Work with experienced surgeons**
  - **Recent liposuction death by pediatrician in LA**
- **Communicate with your surgeons**
  - **Self-help chat groups don't count**
- **Understand limitations of surgery**
  - **What was done for one person may not be right for you**
- **Follow instructions**



St. Louis

FDRS 2024

April 19-21



# CONTACT INFORMATION

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## Lipedema Treatment



## Lipedema Treatment

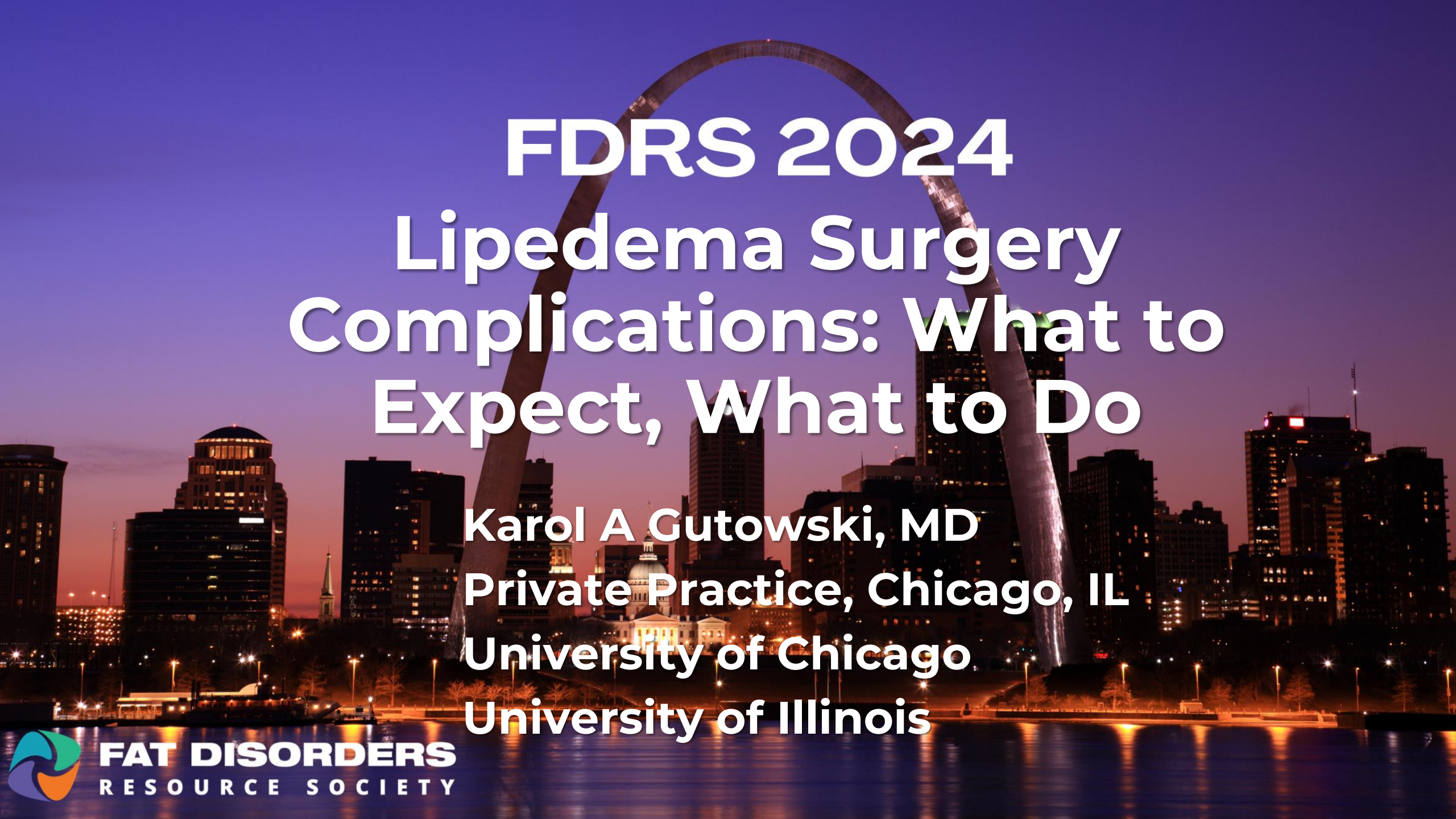
### OVERVIEW

Lipedema is a disorder that occurs mostly in women and is characterized by symmetrical fatty excess in the legs and sometimes arms and trunk. It may be misdiagnosed as obesity. The cause is not known but it may run in families. Some patients experience pain or discomfort in the affected areas therefore we have lipedema treatment.



Before and after first liposuction procedure, then after second liposuction procedure with thigh lift by Dr. Karol Gutowski.





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