



CHECKLIST for Body Contouring Complications

Any form of surgery carries a degree of risk. An individual’s choice to undergo a surgical procedure is based on the perception and balance of risk and benefit. Although the majority of patients do not experience complications, it is important to consider them carefully in relation to how they might affect you if you were in the position to experience one (or more). If you have any questions or doubts you must discuss these with your plastic surgeon and postpone surgery until you are happy.

Early complications (within the first week of surgery)

Bleeding (haematoma)

If there is any suggestion that bleeding into the surgical sites has occurred after surgery, you will need to go back to the operating theatre to have the bleeding stopped and the wound washed out to evacuate the collected blood. Signs that a haematoma is developing include: the filling up of a drain bottle with blood, swelling of the surgical site, increasing pain and the development of severe bruising.

Patient initials

Infection

Rates of severe infection in body contouring plastic surgery are low. However, minor wound infections or inflammation may occur. Minor wound infections are dealt with using special dressings and antibiotics where appropriate. If a major infection develops, it might be necessary to go back to the operating theatre to wash out the wound. In severe cases, more than one return trip to theatre may be required, as well as the use of a specialised dressing, to try and get the wound to heal as quickly as possible.

Patient initials

Blood Clots

Blood clots in the veins of the legs (DVT - deep venous thrombosis) may occur after body contouring surgery, which is why important preventative measures are taken (calf compression stockings, pneumatic calf pumps and blood thinning injections whilst in hospital). You should continue to wear the calf compression stockings for 2-weeks after discharge from hospital. If a DVT does develop, you will need various investigations and treatment as appropriate. A pulmonary embolus (PE) describes a

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blood clot that has broken off from the DVT and lodged in the blood vessels in the lungs. This can be serious, and again, appropriate investigations and treatment is instigated should this be suspected after your operation.

Patient initials

Intermediate complications (within 6-weeks of surgery)

Delayed wound healing

In some people the wounds take longer to heal than in others: this may be due to having had a mild infection of the wound, due to a reaction with the stitches or from "overdoing it" straight after surgery. Delayed healing is not uncommon in body contouring surgery. Normally this is a minor inconvenience, which can be managed with special dressings as an outpatient. Occasionally it can lead to a more severe infection developing as described above.

Patient initials

Suture spitting

Stitches (sutures) that are designed to dissolve sometimes do not dissolve as quickly as they are meant to. On these occasions, there is a chance that they can work their way out of the wound and appear as sharp prickly filaments, occasionally with a surrounding area of redness on the skin. Should this occur, it is nothing to worry about, and can be dealt with simply in the outpatient clinic. These sutures can be removed from the wound in the clinic, and the wounds should then heal over these areas uneventfully.

Patient initials

Seroma

Normally wound fluid stops being produced by the body shortly after surgery. Sometimes, however, the body continues to produce this fluid for some time and the fluid can accumulate in the surgical site, known as a seroma. If this occurs, you may experience discomfort and there is a chance that the fluid can become infected. Therefore should you develop a seroma, it may be necessary for it to be drained.

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This involves a fine needle being passed into the abdomen and the fluid sucked out. The aspiration may need to be repeated on more than one occasion depending upon your situation.

Patient initials

Asymmetry

Everyone has a degree of asymmetry between right and left halves of the body. Sometimes certain asymmetries that were present, but less noticeable pre-operatively are revealed after body contouring surgery. It is important to be aware of this possibility prior to undergoing surgery. Regarding the scars, although every effort is taken to make the scars as symmetrical as possible, the scar is often slightly different each side. This too must be appreciated prior to undergoing surgery.

Patient initials

Late complications (after 6-weeks from surgery)

Scarring

The scars will fade, but this can take up to 1-2 years. Until then scars are often red and firm. As described above, regular scar massage and moisturising is important to help the scars mature and settle down as quickly as possible. Hypertrophic or keloid scars can occasionally occur – these are thickened and lumpy scars that are more common in people of Asian or Afro-Caribbean descent.

Patient initials

The sub-optimal result

Despite removing the planned amount of tissue during surgery, some patients will feel their results are not exactly as they were hoping they would be. This may be due to residual swelling or perceived excess tissue remaining. The limitations of body contouring surgery mean that it may occasionally be necessary to undergo further procedures in order to improve the surgical result - these further operations will incur a further cost. Examples of further surgery include: scar revision, removal of more tissue and liposuction. You will be spoken to frankly at your initial consultations to

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discuss what limitations body contouring surgery may have in your specific circumstances. It is crucial that you know what you can (and cannot) expect from surgery prior to undergoing the procedure.

Importantly, it must be understood that whilst skin can be removed and tissue can be tightened, it is still the same skin you had prior to surgery that is left behind – i.e. if this is thinned, stretched and inelastic, your skin after surgery will remain the same. Therefore a degree of recurrence of laxity (looseness) is inevitable, varying in degree between individuals.

Patient initials.....

Coronavirus and COVID-19

The Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) global pandemic has had an impact on all of our lives. Despite the anticipated “worst” of the disease and the consequences being allegedly over, the disease still exists and can have an impact on surgical and non-surgical procedures. The disease can be acquired in the community and in healthcare settings, and it is impossible to determine accurately how someone might have caught the disease. It is therefore important that you appreciate that if you develop COVID-19 following your procedure, it is not possible to determine whether you caught it during your treatment (e.g. from medical staff or the clinical setting) or whether it was acquired elsewhere.

Furthermore, if you are an asymptomatic carrier of Coronavirus (even if a recent test for Coronavirus has been negative), there is evidence that symptoms can develop after a surgical procedure, particularly with a general anaesthetic. This risk must be acknowledged and accepted if you are to proceed with treatment. Should symptoms develop they could impact on your post-surgical recovery, and even require transfer or admission to an NHS hospital.

Patient initials.....

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the nature of a body contouring operation. I have read the information booklet provided to me and I understand the potential risks and complications associated with this procedure. I agree to follow the postoperative care instructions given to me, including attendance at the postoperative follow up appointments, compliance with instructions to stop smoking/nicotine products (when relevant) and cessation of exercise and heavy lifting during the recovery after surgery. I agree to communicate any concerns I may have in a timely manner and to inform my surgeon of any changes in my health or circumstances that may affect my suitability for, or recovery from body contouring surgery.

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- **I, the undersigned, acknowledge that I have read and understood the nature of body contouring surgery. I have read the information booklet provided to me and I understand the potential risks and complications associated with this procedure.**
- **I further recognise that during the course of an operation, medical treatment or anaesthesia, unforeseen conditions may necessitate different or additional procedures. I therefore authorise my surgeon and attendant medical staff to perform such procedures as deemed necessary by their professional judgement that are in my best interest.**
- **I consent to the administration of such anaesthetics considered necessary and advisable. I understand that all forms of anaesthesia involve risk and the possibility of complications.**
- **I acknowledge that no guarantee has been given by anyone as to the results that may be obtained.**
- **I agree that all has been explained to me in a way I understand regarding the procedure(s), risks, potential benefits and possible alternative treatments**

Patient signature

Patient name.....

Date:

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