

Removing the Excess Skin and Fat After Bariatric Surgery

Board-Certified Plastic Surgeon Dr. Constance M Chen Provides Tips for Post Bariatric Surgery Patients

NY, NY, UNITED STATES, May 10, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Advances in bariatric surgery offer transformative benefits for many people each year. In 2017, the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery estimates that 228,000 people underwent weight loss surgery. Bariatric surgery can improve underlying physical and emotional health, however in many cases the remarkable change in body size due to weight loss can also leave patients with excess skin, resulting in a new set of problems that can only be solved with surgical intervention.

Plastic surgeon Dr. [Constance M Chen](#) notes that “excess weight stretches the skin.” The challenge is that after a significant weight loss following bariatric surgery -- sometimes over 100 pounds -- the skin and tissues can lack the elasticity to shrink down to the body's new proportions. In some cases, people find the excess skin hanging from their new, smaller body frames unattractive and uncomfortable. Moreover, the rubbing from the excess skin can also cause rashes which can become painful and interfere with the activities of daily living. To correct these problems, body contouring to remove excess skin and fat after bariatric surgery can be helpful after weight loss.



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The body parts most impacted by excess skin after bariatric surgery are the abdomen, arms, [breasts](#), thighs, and buttocks. In cases where multiple areas need to be treated, it is usually recommended that patients undergo surgery in staged procedures to minimize medical risk and recovery.

Dr. Chen notes “the abdomen is the most challenging area

for many people. A loose belly fold or “apron” of skin is called a pannus, and can cause irritation and rashes, particularly in warmer weather.” Abdominal surgery can just remove the pannus (panniculectomy) or may also fix separated abdominal muscles (abdominal plication in [abdominoplasty](#) or tummy tuck).

Upper arms that have excess fat, sag, and appear loose and full can be fixed with an arm lift (brachioplasty), which removes excess skin from the underside of the arm but may also leave a visible scar.

Breasts may droop or flatten after massive weight loss. A breast lift (mastopexy) will remove excess skin, reshape the breast tissue, and raise the nipple and areola complex, resulting in a rounder and fuller breast. Dr. Chen adds that “a breast lift does not change the size of the breast and in some cases, patients may request a breast implant or fat grafting to create fuller breasts.”

The lower back and buttocks may be corrected or lifted in a lower body lift. Dr. Chen explains that this is achieved through a hip-to-hip incision across the back, above the buttocks.

The inner thighs can also be treated with a thigh lift that improves the shape of the thigh by reducing excess skin through an incision that starts high on the inner thigh near the groin.

“Body contouring procedures are always personalized for each individual,” says Dr. Chen. “In some cases it is feasible to modify the incision to minimize or hide scarring. For example, if minimal skin resection is needed, we can hide the scars in the armpit for a short-scar brachioplasty or in the groin crease for a thigh lift.”

Dr. Chen concludes that the best time for body contouring after bariatric surgery is when the patient’s weight has stabilized and is close to their ideal weight. This is typically 12-18 months after bariatric surgery. “There are more factors to ensure a positive body contouring result,” says Dr. Chen. “It is key that the patient must be committed to not smoking and to a quality nutrition and exercise routine that will help them achieve and maintain their optimal health and weight. Healthy habits can lessen the risks of complications from surgery and facilitate healing. It is also important that patients be clear about their goals and realistic about expectations. The good news is that bariatric surgery, body contouring, and a commitment to a healthy lifestyle can give people a new lease on life.”

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