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**Inch by inch**

***The skinny on LipoDissolve - and who it can actually help***

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Dissolve fat, lessen the appearance of cellulite, melt away extra inches - without surgery?

It seems too good to be true.

But proponents of LipoDissolve, a procedure being offered as an alternative to liposuction, say for the right person, it can do just that.

The procedure, done in a series of tiny injections over a period of time, doesn't target overt obesity - you can't be severely overweight. Instead, it focuses on those last few inches of fat that seem impervious to diet and exercise.

"Everybody has those areas you just can't get rid of no matter what you do," says Tabatha Harris, a medical assistant at Blue Pacific Aesthetic Medical Group, an El Segundo facility that recently began offering LipoDissolve as one of its noninvasive (i.e. nonsurgical) cosmetic procedures.

"It does seem too good to be true," she admits.

Harris, 24, isn't just a proponent of the procedure. She is undergoing the procedure to thin out her own thighs.

"I found out about it, and right away I was, like, 'I'm getting it.' "

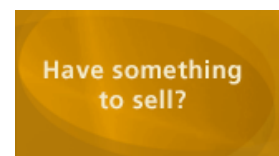
She's hardly alone in striving for svelteness. Pop star Britney Spears reportedly used a Las Vegas LipoDissolve clinic to attain her new-and-improved

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figure. And physicians offices and medi-spas across Los Angeles are clamoring to meet the demand.

Still, it's no chubby person's panacea. According to Dr. Gail Humble of Blue Pacific, the treatment shouldn't be done on anyone with a body mass index (BMI) above 30. Instead, it's best-suited for those who need to lose only an inch or two - a bulge around the belly or a pouch beneath the chin, for instance.

People needing to lop off lots of



weight are likely to be disappointed.

"You're not going to lose weight, necessarily," Harris said. "It's a contouring system; not a weight-loss system."

In a series of sessions involving dozens (hundreds, when all is said and done) of pinprick-

size injections, LipoDissolve practitioners inject a flab-fighting solution - a compound made of phosphatidylcholine (made from soy and modeled after naturally occurring substances in cell membranes), deoxycholate (a synthetic bile salt) and benzyl alcohol (a preservative) - directly into the fat cells.

The solution is said to disrupt the fat cell membrane and cause it to burst, thereby releasing its fatty content.

An ensuing inflammatory response then allows the debris to be cleaned up and expelled as waste (urine and feces).

The result: a smoother, slimmer appearance.

The one major caveat is that the LipoDissolve procedure isn't FDA-approved for the purpose of removing excess body fat. Doctors are able to legally administer the treatment because it has been approved in the past for other things such as removing gallstones.

Proponents say the treatment is safe.

"It is (FDA) approved for breaking down gallstones and things like that, but it is not approved for LipoDissolve," Humble said. "It's just now being used off-label. But that's how Botox got its start. That's how a lot of these things got their start."

Not everyone is convinced.

"The unknowns are a very big issue," said Dr. Alan Matarasso, a spokesman for the American Society for Plastic Surgeons (ASPS). "I think at the end of the day, there may be some role for it, but you've got to be very cautious."

A plastic surgeon with a private practice in New York City, Matarasso conducted a meta-analysis of LipoDissolve by reviewing much of the published data. After doing so, he doesn't deny the treatment might work, but his recommendation to the ASPS was that plastic surgeons should hold off on offering it until certain questions are answered.

How does it work?

Beware!

The consequences

"What are the long-term effects? Are there any metabolic consequences to the body?" he said. "If I could have something that could help my patients that is nonsurgical, I would embrace it. But now there are a lot of unknowns."

Nonetheless, there is no doubt the promise of thin thighs and flat bellies will attract a plethora of patients.

"Human nature wants something that's easier," he said. "If you have to pick one thing that will sell, other than tonic to grow hair, it's something to get rid of fat. Anything that makes you thinner, people want."

The only tried-and-true method for fat-removal is liposuction, he said.

"Liposuction is the gold standard," he said.

Not only that, but LipoDissolve isn't exactly a quick fix. Treatments (which cost \$250 each at Blue Pacific) must be repeated every couple of weeks until the desired smoothness is achieved, with the average patient needing six sessions.

And, it's not exempt from side effects, which include pain, bruising and swelling that may last several days.

Also, as with any injectable, there is a small chance of an allergic reaction or infection.

Plenty of local surgeons offer LipoDissolve. Be sure you do your homework before selecting one.

Here's a sampling:

Blue Pacific Aesthetic

Medical Group

Where: 2301 Rosecrans Ave., Suite 1135, El Segundo.

Contact: (310) 297-9111 or (877) 374-0347. [info@bpacific.com](mailto:info@bpacific.com).

Rejuvalife Vitality

Institute

Where: 9400 Brighton Way, Suite 405, Beverly Hills.

Contact: (310) 276-4494.

Beverly Hills Advanced Laser

Where: 9735 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 414, Beverly Hills. Also in Encino at 16260 Ventura Blvd., Suite 720.

Contact: (310) 276-5890 in Beverly Hills; (818) 990-4404 in Encino.

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