



## Reality Check

## The Anti-Fat Shot

advertisement

**Zap the fat? Better think about that.**

By Rich Maloof for MSN Health &amp; Fitness

**Find More**

- [Meningitis Vaccine Gets Expanded Approval](#)
- [Voltaren Gel Approved for Osteoarthritis](#)
- [11 Million Bottles of Acetaminophen Recalled](#)
- [More Diet & Fitness Articles](#)

**✓ Anti-fat shots take a jab at your flab.**

In the procedure often referred to as Lipodissolve, injectable fat removal, or injection lipolysis, a mixture of drugs is injected into a site on the body where someone wants to reduce fat. The shot can theoretically be used just about anywhere, whether it's on your love handles, thighs, chin, abs, arms, or under your eyes.

**✓ The injections are legal but unregulated.**

By law, any physician can ask a pharmacy to combine the two drugs (phosphatidylcholine and deoxycholate) which together make up this anti-fat formula. But the pharmacies that customize such drugs, called compounding pharmacies, are not regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The FDA has issued [cautionary statements](#), but they won't be overseeing the pharmacies any time soon. Doctors who order the shots and administer them to patients do so with no medically recognized guidelines or limitations.

**✓ There has been a tide of [warnings against the shot](#) from medical organizations.**

Without any formal oversight by government agencies or medical societies, one can't be sure whether the drug compound is safe or even if it works.

Patient testimonials and the before-and-after shots flaunted by companies like [Fig.](#) and [MedSculpt](#) advertise patient experiences that very well may have been positive. But without clinical studies, we have no idea whether such cases are the norm or the exception. Loose estimates are that 20 percent of people getting the shot do not respond. Some of the side effects noted so far include blackened skin, lumps, ripples, and bumps that don't go away, bee-sting like pain, bruising, and swelling. [Patient complaints against Fig.](#), for one, prompted a warning from the Better Business Bureau.

**✓ Legit studies will shed light on the drug's safety and efficacy.**

Dr. Leroy Young, plastic surgeon with BodyAesthetic Plastic Surgery in St. Louis, is awaiting final approval for a formal study on injection lipolysis. He's been scratching his head as to why the FDA has an elaborate process for clearing his study when the drug is commercially available with no government oversight. "The FDA does not feel it has authority over compounding pharmacies, and that's where these drugs come from," he says. "I think this is a regulatory loophole because it allows [physicians] to start treating people when there's little or no proof of safety and efficacy."

As part of a training program, Young himself received an anti-fat injection. He confirms that it hurt but after six months saw no change from his single shot ("Maybe I just fell within that 20 percent of non-responders," he allows). Young and his colleagues aim to test 20 people with abdominal injections to one side.

**✓ The fat goes away, but no one's quite sure where it goes.**

So far it's understood that the injection kills fat cells and dissolves the fat those cells held. But what exactly happens to the dissolved fat is an unanswered question. If the fat winds up in your bloodstream, where it can clog arteries and cause heart disease, wouldn't you rather have the double chin? The idea that the fat is simply taken up into the liver and excreted, as some have theorized hopefully, is bunk.

**✓ The shot will be a terrific treatment for zapping away fat ... if it works.**

The anti-fat shot promises advantages no other treatment offers. Injections can be administered in a doctor's office, so it may be a fast and effective option for people who don't want to undergo surgery. Small sites on the body can be pinpointed, and the shot may be a good post-procedure treatment when minor lumps of fat remain after liposuction.

"I hope it works! The best thing for me would be if it does work," says the open-minded Young, whose own practice hinges on cosmetic treatments. "But it really bothered me ethically and morally that somebody could just go and use something that hasn't been studied thoroughly."

---

Confused by health myths and misinformation? You need a Reality Check. Each week, Rich Maloof talks to leading health experts to bring you the straight facts on a broad range of health topics.

**More on Diet & Fitness**

- [Before & After: Weight Loss Success Stories](#)
- [Calculate Your BMI](#)
- [Men's Fitness](#)
- [Women's Fitness](#)

**Find More on MSN Health & Fitness**

- [Surprising Feel-Great Foods](#)
- [From Fat to Fabulous](#)
- [Spilling the Beans: How Healthy Is Coffee?](#)
- [Healthy Eating on \\$7 a Day](#)

**MSN Shopping**



- [Diet books](#)
- [Fitness DVDs](#)
- [Herbs](#)
- [Vitamins](#)
- [Minerals](#)

**More on MSN**

- [Male Myths -- Busted!](#)
- [Top 10 Places to Learn a Foreign Language](#)
- [Has the Public Soured on Martha?](#)