

ABC News says we should forget old-school lipo and say hello to **laser liposuction**, which FDA has approved a few weeks ago. Well, hello laser liposuction! This new fat-zapping technique, also known as **SmartLipo**, has a lot going for it.

When people walk out of here, you can't tell they've had lipo, says Bruce Katz, a professor of dermatology at New York's Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, who has pioneered the first U.S. laser liposuction trials.

Unlike old lipo, the laser liposuction makes fast, have no loose skin after the procedure, and feel well enough to go back to work in just a few days.

According to People magazine, SmartLipo may be as close as humans can come to that fat-melting fantasy. So what is all the fuss about? What are the major differences between old-school lipo and laser liposuction?

**Old Lipo:** usually under general anesthesia, loose skin remains where fat is sucked out, a 4-to 6-mm tube sucks out solid fat; lots of tissue trauma, scarring where tube enters body; stitches often required, resume work after a week, lipo on abdomen.

**SmartLipo:** always with local anesthesia, tightened skin from collagen production where lasers are used (visible after three to six months), 1-mm tube fitted with laser melts fat; little trauma, almost no scarring; no stitches needed, resume work after two days, laser lipo on abdomen.

The day after SmartLipo's Oct.31 FDA approval, doctors began offering the procedure. Thanks to People magazine, here are his answers to patients frequently asked questions.

#### **Why is laser liposuction better than old-school lipo?**

Traditional liposuction uses a vacuum with a metal tube attached, which the doctor moves back and forth manually. Because the human hand cannot be very precise, you get a lot of bleeding, swelling and destruction of tissue. But the SmartLipo laser glides through fat like a hot knife through butter, which means less destruction and bruising.

#### **What is the biggest improvement?**

Now we can treat a lot more people who, before, would need to have surgery on top of liposuction either a neck or face lift, because loose skin would get worse from the lipo. Or if they had loose, flabby skin on the arms, they only thing we could do was to cut out the skin.

Now we can use the laser to take out the fat and, as an added benefit, tighten the overlying skin too.

#### **Why is laser lipo considered safer?**

Because you do not have to go under general anesthesia. There is no surgery that is completely safe, but there have been no serious side effects associated with this procedure. And the recovery times are much faster.

#### **How much fat can one remove in a session?**

We do not usually exceed 8 lbs. SmartLipo is for sculpting, not for large volume fat removal.

#### **Where does the liquefied fat go?**

The vast majority of fat is either squeezed out of the incisions like oozing blood or suctioned out. But because you are suctioning **liquid** fat, instead of solid, it is not as traumatic. In addition, a very small amount of the fat is absorbed by the body and excreted, probably within 24 hours.

#### **The fat absorbed by the body are you sure it does it not enter the blood stream?**

We have done blood tests, and there is no increase in fatty levels, cholesterol and triglycerides in the blood; there is no increased risk of heart attack or stroke.

#### **How do patients feel after the procedure?**

Most people go back to work after two days. They will, however, wear compression bandages for two weeks, on average, compared to up to six weeks with regular lipo.

#### **How long do the results last?**

They are permanent. The body has a finite number of fat cells; removed cells do not grow back.