

## **Fat Grafting**

Fat injection involves the use of your own fat cells to augment (plump up ) areas in the body where there is volume loss. This treatment has revolutionised the treatment of the aging face, breast surgery and other conditions involving localised loss of volume. This technique has been used extensively for over a decade and has been shown to produce safe, long-lasting, and natural-appearing results. Because fat grafting uses the patients' own 'live' fat , it is a significant improvement on other synthetic or potentially risky injectable agents.

Fat grafting usually involves harvesting fat from one part of the body, washing/ purifying it, and the carefully re-injecting it with specially designed needles into the areas requiring augmentation. The procedure may need to be repeated several times to achieve the desired result.

Swelling, which is commonly seen after fat injection, usually settles within 2-3 weeks. The degree of swelling is most dependent on the area injected.

### **Am I a good candidate for fat grafting?**

Patients who benefit from fat grafting are people who desire augmentation or filling of volume-deficient areas. The most commonly grafted areas include the breasts , hands, face (including the lips), and depressions in the skin contour such as those that have developed following liposuction and scarring.

Generally, patients who are considered for fat injection are in good health. If you have a history of abnormal bleeding or swelling following a procedure you should notify your surgeon. A smoking history should be disclosed to your surgeon. Each patient's anatomy and proportions vary, and the decision to utilize fat injection techniques depends on the goals of the patient as well as the surgeon.

### **How do I prepare for surgery?**

It is important to avoid taking any Aspirin or products containing Aspirin for 2 weeks either side of the operation since Aspirin has an adverse effect on bruising. The same is true for non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (such as Brufen and Nurofen). If you are a smoker it is helpful to stop for two weeks before surgery and for a week

afterwards so as not to restrict the circulation to the skin.

### **How it is done**

This procedure is usually done under general anaesthetic. If the area for fat injection is small it may be done under local anaesthetic and sedation.

Fat is harvested using a special suction cannula using sterile technique. The tummy is the most common site for harvesting. The amount of fat involved is often small, and it usually doesn't significantly alter the appearance of the tummy.

Once enough fat is obtained from the donor area, it is then purified. This often requires the use of a centrifuge which spins the fat and removes impurities. The fat is then placed into the areas requiring augmentation. The injection needle is usually passed in and out of the areas to be augmented multiple times. This creates a 'grid' of threads of fat graft.. A dressing may then be placed.

You will be instructed regarding a massage program after the procedure. Swelling and bruising usually resolve within 2 to 3 weeks.

### **Risks of fat Injection**

- Swelling is the most common post-operative side effect. Most of the swelling settles down within several weeks.
- Bruising in both the donor and recipient areas as a result of bleeding. It is unusual to require a transfusion.
- Numbness of the skin overlying the donor and injected areas. This is usually temporary.
- Slight asymmetry or contour irregularity. This usually improves as the swelling resolves.
- Under or over correction of the defect
- Infection
- Loss of fat viability, with resultant failure of the desired augmentation