

Suction Assisted Lipectomy: An Important Tool in Surgical Management of LE

Presented by Dr. Dhrur Singhal at the LE&RN Summit on Oct. 2-3, 2020.

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Lymphedema is not all the same: it can be fluid dominant or fat dominant. If it is fat dominant, Suction Assisted Lipectomy can be performed to remove the lymphatic solids and fatty deposits that have accumulated as a result of chronic Lymphedema. Each patient needs to have a full evaluation of his/her Lymphedema through a physical exam, measurements of the limb or body part + Indocyanine Green Lymphography (ICG) + Lymphoscintigraphy and/or MRI to determine if the Lymphedema is fluid or fat dominant and if this surgery would be beneficial to that patient's unique situation.

Suction Assisted Lipectomy is a power assisted liposuction technique that was developed by Dr. Hakim Brorson over 30 years ago. Dr. Brorson has trained most of the surgeons who perform this surgery. This surgery does not cure Lymphedema, but it is life changing because the quality of life improves by decreasing the volume of the affected area of the body, improving mobility and reducing the risk of infections. There is good evidence and follow up that show improvement in lymphatic drainage once the excess fat is removed. It does require the patient to wear compression 24/7. The patient needs to be 100% compliant in wearing compression for this surgery to have a long-lasting positive result.

Dr. Singhal's experience is that once the patient sees their MRI results, which can distinguish between fat and fluid dominant LE, they are more compliant with use of compression 24/7. All in all, this procedure is life changing for those with fat dominant Lymphedema who are more likely to be disciplined with daily compression following the surgery.

There is a wonderful little free book called "**Understanding LE: Keeping the Train on Track,**" written by Dr. Singhal along with cartoon artist, Megan Belanger to make Lymphedema easily understood. The book can be downloaded off the LE&RN website. Link:

<https://lymphaticnetwork.org/resource-downloads>