

# SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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## **NEW LIPOSUCTION DEVICE SPEEDS RECOVERY, REPORT UT SOUTHWESTERN PLASTIC SURGEONS**

DALLAS – July 12, 2001 – A new liposuction device that varies the amount of ultrasound used is enabling UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas plastic surgeons to help patients recover with less bruising and discomfort than traditional ultrasound-assisted liposuction.

UT Southwestern physicians treating patients at Zale Lipshy University Hospital are using pulsed ultrasound-assisted liposuction to pinpoint the amount of energy necessary for effective emulsification of fat, while avoiding the adverse effects of ultrasonic energy.

Traditional ultrasound-assisted liposuction (UAL), refined by UT Southwestern plastic surgeons, uses the energy of high-frequency sound waves to liquefy fat before it is removed with low-pressure suction. Some plastic surgeons prefer UAL because it provides an “airbrush effect” that creates a smoother treatment to an area.

“The main problem with using an ultrasonic device continuously is that it can develop cumulative effects of energy and heat,” said Dr. Jeffrey Kenkel, vice chairman of plastic surgery at UT Southwestern. “Heat is a thermal byproduct of ultrasound that can cause burns, temporarily injure nerves and prolong recovery.”

Pulsed UAL allows a surgeon to vary the amount of ultrasound by switching to an optional pulsed mode, which breaks up the energy at one-tenth second intervals.

This device provides an alternative for the more than 230,000 Americans who undergo liposuction every year. According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, liposuction is one of the most common cosmetic procedures performed in the United States. Between 1992 and 1999 the number of liposuction procedures increased by 389 percent.

In an earlier study published in *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*, Kenkel and Dr. Rod Rohrich, chairman of plastic surgery at UT Southwestern, found that sensory nerves take 10 weeks to regenerate with ultrasound rather than six weeks with traditional suction. Since pulsed UAL focuses the energy, it should correct the side effect of nerve desensitization.

(MORE)

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“Any time you treat an area there is a loss of sensation. But the length of time may decrease now that less energy is being used,” Kenkel said. “The challenge is to use just the right amount of energy to accomplish your goal without the side effects.”

Kenkel and Rohrich published the first and only medical text on UAL in 1998: *Practical Applications in Body Sculpting Surgery*. They have taught the innovative technique to more than 2,000 plastic surgeons.

For more information on pulse ultrasound-assisted liposuction, call 214-648-3571.

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