

Specific Risks of Thigh Lift

Every surgical procedure involves a certain amount of risk and it is important that you understand these risks and the possible complications associated with them. In addition, every procedure has limitations. An individual's choice to undergo a surgical procedure is based on the comparison of the risk to potential benefit. Although most patients do not experience these complications, you should discuss them with your plastic surgeon at The Aesthetic Center by Kaiser Permanente to make sure you understand all possible risks of thigh lift surgery.

Delayed Healing

Wound disruption or delayed wound healing is possible. Areas undergoing surgery may not heal normally and may take a long time to heal. Some areas of skin may die or slough. This may require frequent dressing changes or further surgery to remove the non-healed tissue. Individuals who have decreased blood supply to tissue from past surgery or radiation therapy may be at increased risk for wound healing and poor surgical outcome. Smokers have a greater risk of skin loss and wound healing complications.

Scars

All surgery leaves scars, some more visible than others. Although good wound healing after a surgical procedure is expected, this surgery will result in long, prominent scars that are permanent. Abnormal scars may occur within the skin and deeper tissues. Scars may be unattractive and of different color than the surrounding skin tone. Scar appearance may also vary within the same scar. Scars may be asymmetrical (appear different on the right and left side of the body). There is the possibility of visible marks in the skin from sutures. These scars may become raised, red in the first few weeks/months, but usually settle down over time. However, some patients are prone to "hypertrophic" or "keloid" scars i.e. prominent, raised, red scars that do not settle. Further treatments with medications and/or surgery may be required.

Pain

You will experience pain after your surgery. Pain of varying intensity and duration may occur and persist after surgery. Chronic pain may occur very infrequently from nerves becoming trapped in scar tissue after surgery (neuromas).

Sensation of Thigh Tightness

After lifting the thigh skin, there can be a sensation of the thigh skin being tight. Usually this feeling subsides over time. Additional surgery may be required to correct this problem.

Change in Sensation

It is common to experience diminished (or loss of) skin sensation in areas that have had surgery. It is rare to experience permanent changes in sensation, but is possible. Diminished (or complete loss of) skin sensation may not totally resolve after surgery. There is a very small risk of motor nerve injury which may result in impairment of lower extremity function.

Seromas (Fluid Collection)

Infrequently, fluid may accumulate between the skin and the underlying tissues following surgery, trauma or vigorous exercise. Should this problem occur, it may require additional procedures for drainage of fluid. To help prevent this, surgical drains are usually employed.

Use of Drains

During your surgery, your doctor may find it necessary to place a drain(s). A drain is a small tube that drains fluid out from the area that was operated on. You will be instructed on the use of your drain. Placement of the drain may require a small separate incision. The drain will be removed when your doctor feels it is no longer necessary. The drain site may be closed at the time of drain removal. Closing the drain site may require special surgical tape or sometimes a suture. Your doctor may leave the site open to drain any residual fluid under the wound.

Pubic Region Distortion

It is possible, though unusual, for women to develop distortion of their labia or pubic area. Should this occur, additional treatment including surgery may be necessary. There may be difficulty with sexual intercourse or changes to the urinary stream/defecation after this procedure as well.

(continues on back)

(continued from front)

Re-Loosening of Skin

Almost all patients who have this procedure will notice re-loosening of the skin over time. This occurs due to the body's inherent response to stretch. Patients who have lost massive amounts of weight are prone to this phenomenon. No matter how tight the surgeon makes your skin at the time of surgery, it will re-loosen with time to a certain degree. Everyone loosens to a different degree.

Skin Contour Irregularities

Contour and shape irregularities may occur. Visible and palpable wrinkling of skin may occur. Residual skin irregularities at the ends of the incisions or "dog ears" are always a possibility when there is excessive redundant skin. This may improve with time, or it can be surgically corrected.

Skin Discoloration/Swelling

Bruising and swelling normally occurs following surgery. The skin in or near the surgical site can appear either lighter or darker than surrounding skin. Although uncommon, swelling (leg and/or feet) and skin discoloration may persist for long periods of time and, in rare situations, may be permanent.

Asymmetry

Symmetrical body appearance may not result after surgery. Factors such as skin tone, fatty deposits, skeletal prominence, and muscle tone may contribute to normal asymmetry in body features. Most patients have differences between the right and left side of their bodies before any surgery is performed. Additional surgery may be necessary to attempt to diminish asymmetry.