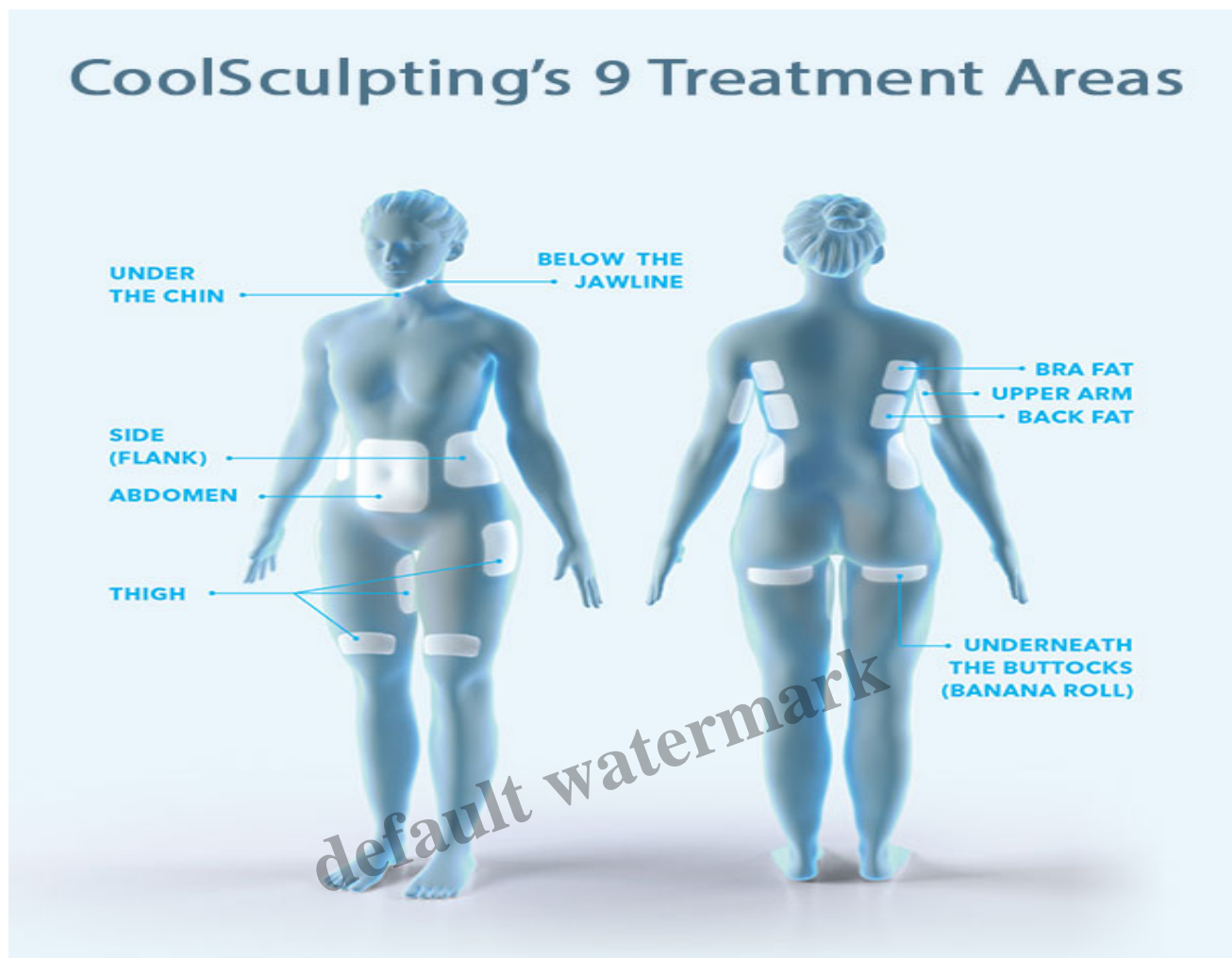


Learn if CoolSculpting Works

Description

Blame it on swimsuit season, but at dinner parties across the country, a topic has lately resurfaced: CoolSculpting. The fat-freezing process, properly known as cryolipolysis, was first discovered after doctors saw that toddlers who ate a lot of ice pops had fat deterioration in their cheeks.

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“Fat has a higher temperature sensitivity than skin,” argues UCLA professor and plastic surgeon Jason Roostaeian, MD. “It goes through cell death before your skin does.”

CoolSculpting was licensed by the FDA in 2010, and it gained popularity after it was rebranded from a tiny spot treatment to a noninvasive alternative to liposuction, promising to destroy love handles and bra bulge with the wave of a cooling paddle. The non-surgical fat reduction gadget was recently cleared to treat loose skin beneath the chin, a smaller area that is more difficult to change by natural measures such as diet and exercise. Does it sound too wonderful to be true? The technology works, according to Roostaeian and Manhattan-based CoolSculpting expert Jeannel Astarita. They examine the ins and outs of fat freezing, from weight loss to health dangers, in this article.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

CoolSculpting techniques suction your skin and fat “like a vacuum,” according to Roostaeian, using circular paddles in one of four sizes. Cooling panels begin crystallizing your fat cells while you relax in a reclined chair for up to two hours. “It’s a minor annoyance that people seem to tolerate rather well,” he says. “You feel suction and cold sensations that finally become numb.” In fact, the procedure atmosphere is so relaxed that patients can bring laptop computers to work on, watch movies, or simply

slumber while the equipment works.

WHO IS IT INTENDED FOR?

Above all, says Roostaeian, CoolSculpting is “for someone searching for minor changes,” not “for someone looking for one-stop-shop significant fat reduction like liposuction.” When a client comes in for a consultation with Astarita, she analyzes “their age, skin quality—will it rebound? Will it look good after the volume is removed?—as well as how thick or pinchable their tissue is,” before accepting them for treatment, because suction panels can only treat the tissue they can access. “I won’t be able to offer someone a wow effect if they have thick, solid tissue,” Astarita explains.

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES?

“It frequently takes a few sessions to get to your ideal outcomes,” says Roostaeian, who confesses that a single treatment produces very little improvement, which is sometimes invisible to clients. “One disadvantage of [CoolSculpting] is that there is a range for any one person.” I’ve seen people who can’t perceive the difference between before and after photos.” However, all hope is not lost because both doctors believe that the more treatments you have, the better the outcomes you will observe. Eventually, up to 25% of the fat in a treated area will be reduced. “At best, you get moderate fat loss—a slightly improved waistline, less bulging in any troublesome areas.” I’d like to underline the word “gentle.”

WILL YOU LOSE WEIGHT AS A RESULT?

“None of these devices lose pounds,” Astarita explains, emphasizing that muscle weighs more than fat. When you lose 25% of your fat in a handful of tissue, it won’t add up to much on the scale, but “when [you lose] what’s pouring over the top of your jeans or your bra, it counts,” she says. Her customers come to her looking for better proportions at their current weight, and they may leave having reduced “one or two clothes sizes.”

IS IT LONG-TERM?

“I particularly emphasize to my patients that while it is a permanent fat reduction treatment, it is only effective if you control your weight.” “If you acquire weight, it will go somewhere,” Astarita explains. Changing your habit through eating and exercise can also result in long-term advantages to your body. “A tiny portion of this is on you: if you do 14 cycles and don’t modify your food or eating habits, [your body] won’t change at all.”

WHEN SHOULD YOU BEGIN?

With holidays and weddings in the horizon, Roostaeian suggests scheduling your session three to six months in advance. The results are not obvious for at least four weeks, with fat loss peaking around week eight. “By twelve weeks, your skin has smoothed out and appears nicer,” Astarita explains. “That’s the icing on the cake.” However, as Roostaeian points out, “the results after one treatment are

nearly usually insufficient.” Each [therapy] includes a recovery period, so you’ll need at least six to eight weeks.

ISN’T IT SAFE?

Because this is a noninvasive technique, the risks are quite low in comparison. Contour abnormalities can occur in the same way that liposuction can. While the CoolSculpting machine reduces the possibility of human error in fat removal, it also has limitations in terms of fine-tuning elimination like an artistic plastic surgeon might by hand. A potential problem is that your numbed nerves seem as if they’ve fallen asleep for “weeks, if not months—that can happen,” admits Roostaeian. Wounds will not form, and swelling will be limited. Additional dangers should be discussed with your doctor.

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1. Lifestyle

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