



Prepare For Lipoedema Surgery

OCTOBER 2024

It's nearly time! We have prepared the following to help you get ready. We are available for any questions/concerns you may have (even if you feel a bit nervous). Call Tahlia, Jane and Juanita on 02 9387 2110 or email tahlia@naveensomia.com.au

QUICK CHECKLIST

- Custom compression surgical garments
- LX9 or Biocompression Pants
- MLD Therapy
- Blood Tests/ECG
- Cease nicotine products (inc vaping) & reduce alcohol
- Moisturise daily
- Healthy lifestyle - daily movement / anti-inflammatory diet
- Prepare for your recovery
- Vibration plate
- Other Logistics (ie work, staying in Sydney)
- Family & Friends Support

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4 months before

- **Order your custom flat knit waist to toe Class 2 compression NOW**
- Eat to reduce inflammation
- Moisturise daily - use tubbed or tubed (not a pump)
- Ease into wearing compression if you are not already accustomed to it
- Daily Movement - aqua aerobics, underwater walking, yoga, weights, walking, vibration plate
- Cease nicotine products including vaping products and reduce alcohol.
- Discuss a surgical Manual Lymphatic Drainage program with a lipoedema therapist (see our resources pdf)

WHAT COMPRESSION GARMENTS DOI NEED FOR SURGERY?

Custom Class 2 flat knit - waist to toe with bathroom ease (zippers or crotchless)

Arm surgery patients will be provided with surgical garments on the day

PROVIDERS:

Medi Australia - Mandy 0498021039 or Axel 0458038130

OAPL - Jenny - oapl.com.au/service/compression-therapy/ 02 9319 1955

Flow Garments - flowgarments.com.au / 0433 585 143 Sarah (VIC)

- Start wearing your custom fitted garments every day for 3-4 weeks before surgery (no need to sleep in them at this point). Bring the garments with you on the day of surgery and take with you to the operating theatre. You will wake up in the garment.
- **Have your preoperative bloods tests and ECG NOW**

This is to check for any underlying conditions. These will be reviewed at your preop consultation with Dr Somia. If you have not seen Dr Somia in person you must attend in person for this appointment. Dr Somia may ask you to get clearance for surgery from any specialists involved in your care ie heart specialist or haematologist.

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6 weeks before

- Contact Medirent to arrange a biocompression pump (use daily for 6 weeks before to soften the fat before surgery and maintain lymphatics.) The softer the fat is the more can be removed on the day of surgery. Continue to use the pump for 6-12 weeks after surgery. Medirent have Dr Somia's protocol on file or we can provide a copy if required.

[medirent.com.au/products/compression-pumps/biocompression-biopants/](https://www.medirent.com.au/products/compression-pumps/biocompression-biopants/)

- Stop alcohol consumption.

1 month before

- Have basic blood test to check everything is ok to proceed.
- Complete hospital paperwork. Payment for Dr Somia is due 3 weeks before and the hospital and anaesthetist a few days before.
- Co-ordinate with your lipoedema therapist for treatment post surgery.
- If you are travelling interstate or remotely from Sydney organise an appointment with your GP in the first week post operatively. You may not need this appointment but it is best to be prepared.

Consider Purchasing

- Absorbent pads (you may experience water/blood leakage in the first 24-48 hours following surgery).
- A foam donut cushion for your toilet and a shower chair (leg surgery)
- A body pillow to place between your legs for sleeping. (not applicable for arm surgery).
- Take a towel for your return trip home to help with any leakage.
- Combine dressing pads (place between skin and skin compression if swelling is intense after surgery)

3 weeks before

- Cease weightloss injections if you take them (ie Ozempic, semaglutide)

2 weeks before

- Cease taking the contraceptive/birth control pill

1 week before

- Commence Arnica or Bromelain tablets from the chemist one week before to help with bruising and inflammation. Take as directed.
- Read over your admission instructions again. Eat well, hydrate, get good sleep and engage in movement. This will help with your recovery.

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Logistics to consider

Will I need someone to care for me? Organise someone to help you for the first few days after surgery with daily activities. Set up a recovery station at home with everything you will need handy. (See what to expect during recovery for more info)

It is important to have a good support network and an understanding support person post operatively. It is not uncommon to experience 'post op blues' after a general anaesthetic and major surgery. Patients and importantly their carer should be aware that between days 3-6 post operatively they may experience low mood, irritability, bouts of tearfulness, and general feelings of "what have I done".

How long will I need off work? This depends on the type of work you do. If you work in an office environment you can return to work when you feel well and if you are able to go for short walks regularly. Most people take 4 weeks off work. If you work in a manual capacity you may need to take more time off work ie 6-8 weeks or more.

If I live outside Sydney how long do I have to stay? You must have a travel companion to assist you with travel and post surgery care. For patients who live within a 1-2 hour flight distance from Sydney you can usually travel on Day 2 or 3 after surgery. For patients further away ie WA or NT we recommend a stay of one week in Sydney. Please discuss your travel plans with us if you are outside of Sydney.

What is the investment?

Legs: Approximately \$22,000 for surgeon, anaesthetist and hospital. We recommend allowing an additional \$2000-3000 for garments, mld, additional accomodation, medications etc. A formal estimate will be issued 3 months before.

Arms: Approximately \$15,000 for surgeon, anaesthetist, hospital and garments. We recommend allowing an additional \$2000 for mld, additional accomodation, medications etc. A formal estimate will be issued 3 months before.

Can I claim from medicare and fund or access my superannuation?

At this time Liposuction treatment for lipoedema is considered by medicare and health funds a cosmetic procedure and cannot be claimed. Please note we treat lipoedema not lymphoedema and we do not perform skin excision at the same time.

Some patients have however had success in accessing their superannuation fund (pain must be symptomatic to apply). Withdrawal of super is considered to be income and taxed accordingly. Consider carefully before applying. Only one surgery can be applied for at a time and our practice policy is to complete superannuation applications when a surgery date has been confirmed.

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what to expect during recovery

- Expect to stay a minimum of 1 night in hospital (some require 2 nights) Follow instructions from the hospital and Dr Somia. Take pain meds/antibiotics as instructed. Do not drive/work for 24 hours after surgery.
- WALK, REST, HYDRATE, REPEAT: Keep moving, increase fluids. Walking speeds up drainage, reduces inflammation and aids healing. Increase activity gradually and maintain your measurement diary.
- DRESSINGS: It is normal for your dressings to be soaked from the blood tinged liposuction fluid in the following days. You can have a quick shower however you should not soak or be fully immersed in water for at least 2 weeks following surgery. Your wounds will initially be covered by a waterproof dressing. If this dressing gets soaked or no longer looks waterproof, remove it and gently pat the wound dry and cover with a fresh dressing. Your sutures are dissolvable and do not need removal. You can wear your garments in the shower as they dry relatively quickly or you can remove it for showering purposes only. If you have white tape this can be removed anytime. If you use barrier cream you don't need to use the white tape. Applying brown micropore tape on the suture lines for 12 weeks will help the scar. Silicone tape can be used anytime after 2-3 weeks in lieu of micropore.
- SWELLING AND BRUISING: You will swell to your original size or even larger. This will peak at 3-5 days and then slowly begin to subside. You may also experience swelling and bruising in the ankles and genitals. Swelling generally takes 6-12 weeks to subside however swelling is highly individual and may take longer than 12 weeks to subside. Swelling after this kind of surgery can linger in some areas for up to 12 months and is normal.
- ITCHING is normal and indicates healing. NUMBNESS AND TINGLING is also normal and in most cases resolves in 3 months.
- DRAINAGE: Most stops in 24-48 hours. Carry absorbent pads.
- CONSTIPATION/MENSTRUAL CYCLES: Removal of the fat cells may result in constipation, loose or fatty stools and a more intense or early period.
- Wear your garment 24/7 except for showering (you can shower in the garment - it will dry off relatively quickly). The garment helps fluid drain, minimises bruising and holds your skin in place while it reattaches to the underlying tissue. Best results are achieved when worn for 12 months. Once swelling has reduced you may wish to reorder your custom compression.
- You will see Dr Somia one week following surgery (either in person or virtual consultation). If necessary we will arrange for your GP to review you. You will see Dr Somia as necessary in the following weeks/months.

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