



SUBMENTAL LIPOSUCTION PATIENT HANDOUT

What Is Submental Liposuction?

Submental liposuction — also called chin liposuction, neck liposuction, or submental lipectomy — is a minimally invasive surgical procedure that removes excess fat beneath the chin and along the jawline to create a more defined, sculpted neck-to-jaw transition. It is one of the most popular facial contouring procedures performed today.

A "double chin" can develop due to genetics, weight fluctuation, or the natural ageing process — and often persists even in patients who are otherwise fit and at a healthy weight. Submental liposuction permanently removes these localized fat deposits, producing long-lasting results when body weight remains stable.

Important: Submental liposuction is a contouring procedure — not a weight loss treatment. It is designed for patients with localized fat in the chin and neck area, not for general weight reduction.

Understanding the Anatomy: What Liposuction Can and Cannot Treat

A "double chin" or heavy neck can result from several different anatomical factors —not just excess fat:

- Subcutaneous (pre-platysmal) fat — fat above the platysma muscle, directly beneath the skin. This is what submental liposuction treats.
- Subplatysmal fat — fat beneath the platysma muscle. Liposuction alone cannot safely reach this layer. A neck lift or submentoplasty may be required.
- Platysmal banding — vertical cords in the neck caused by the platysma muscle. Liposuction does not correct bands; a platysmaplasty or neck lift is needed.
- Skin laxity — loose or sagging neck skin. Liposuction does not tighten skin. Patients with significant laxity may require a neck lift or complementary skin-tightening treatment.
- Submandibular gland prominence — enlarged salivary glands that create fullness below the jaw. These cannot be addressed with liposuction alone.
- Low hyoid bone position — a naturally low-set hyoid bone creates an obtuse cervicomenal angle that no amount of fat removal can correct.

Dr. Chitte will carefully assess all of these factors during your consultation to determine whether submental liposuction alone is appropriate, or whether additional procedures are recommended.



Who Is a Good Candidate?

Ideal candidates for submental liposuction are:

- At or near a stable, healthy weight
- Bothered by localized fat beneath the chin that has not responded to diet and exercise
- In good general health with no significant medical conditions
- Non-smokers
- Realistic in their expectations
- Have good skin elasticity — younger patients in their 20s–40s typically achieve the best skin retraction after fat removal

Contraindications / Who May Not Be a Suitable Candidate:

- Significant skin laxity or a "turkey neck" — a neck lift is likely more appropriate
- Visible platysmal bands — require platysmaplasty
- Significant subplatysmal fat (below the muscle)
- Prominent submandibular glands
- History of significant weight fluctuation or plans for substantial weight loss
- Active smokers
- Unrealistic expectations about the extent of improvement

The Procedure: Step by Step

Submental liposuction is a short outpatient procedure, typically completed in 30–60 minutes.

Anaesthesia: Most commonly performed under general anaesthesia.

Incisions: Dr. Chitte makes 1–3 small incisions (2–4 mm) concealed beneath the chin and sometimes behind the earlobes.

Fat Removal: A thin tube called a cannula is inserted through the incisions. Using gentle suction, Dr. Chitte carefully removes the subcutaneous fat while sculpting the contours of the chin and neck.

Closure: Incisions are closed with fine sutures. A compression garment (chin strap) is applied to reduce swelling and support healing.



Recovery Timeline

Timeframe	What to Expect
Days 1–3	Swelling, bruising, mild discomfort. Keep head elevated. Apply cool packs.
Days 3–7	Most patients return to work and light daily activities. Compression garment worn continuously.
Days 5–7	Sutures typically removed. Bruising begins resolving.
Week 1–2	Bruising resolves (may extend onto chest in some patients). Compression garment continued as directed.
Weeks 2–3	Resume light exercise. Avoid strenuous activity for approximately 3 weeks.
Month 1–3	Swelling gradually settles. Contour improves progressively.
Month 3–6	Final results visible as residual swelling fully resolves and skin retracts.

Risks and Potential Complications

Submental liposuction is generally well tolerated when performed by an experienced surgeon in an accredited facility. However, as with any surgical procedure, risks exist:

Common (Expected):

- Temporary swelling and bruising (may extend onto chest and neck)
- Numbness beneath the chin — typically resolves over weeks to months
- Mild discomfort managed with oral pain medication
- Small amount of bloody drainage from incision sites in first few days

Less Common:

- Contour irregularities or asymmetry
- Under-correction (insufficient fat removal)
- Seroma (fluid accumulation)
- Infection

Rare but Serious:

- Injury to the marginal mandibular nerve — can cause temporary or (rarely) permanent weakness of the lower lip
- Haematoma
- Skin necrosis (if over-aggressive technique used)
- Over-resection leading to an overly tight or skeletal appearance

Skin that does not retract adequately after fat removal can result in worsened laxity or sagging — this is why proper patient selection (assessing skin elasticity before surgery) is critical.



Comparing Your Options: Submental Fat Treatment

Treatment	Type	Fat Removal	Skin Tightening	Sessions	Downtime	Permanence
Submental Liposuction	Surgical	Definitive, single session	No (relies on skin retraction)	1	5–10 days	Permanent
Lipolysis	Injectable	Gradual, moderate	No	2–6 (spaced ≥4 weeks)	2–3 days (significant swelling per session)	Permanent
CoolSculpting (cryolipolysis)	Non-invasive	Gradual, moderate	Minimal	1–2	Minimal	Permanent
Radiofrequency / Ultrasound	Non-invasive	Minimal	Mild to moderate	Multiple	None	Temporary
Neck Lift	Surgical	Yes (+ deeper structures)	Yes (skin + muscle)	1	2-4 weeks	Long-lasting

Lipolysis: An injectable fat-dissolving treatment. Most patients require 2–6 sessions. However, it causes significant post-injection swelling with each session and does not address skin laxity. It is generally considered less efficient than surgical liposuction for larger volumes of fat.

Neck Lift: For patients with significant skin laxity, platysmal banding, subplatysmal fat, or submandibular gland prominence, a neck lift provides more comprehensive and longer-lasting rejuvenation than liposuction alone.

Longevity of Results

The fat cells removed during liposuction are **permanently eliminated**. However, if you gain a significant amount of weight after surgery, remaining fat cells in the area can expand and the result may be partially compromised. Maintaining a stable weight after surgery is important to preserve your outcome.

The natural ageing process will continue — skin laxity may develop over time. Some patients choose complementary procedures later to maintain their result.

Ontario Considerations

- Submental liposuction is considered **cosmetic and not covered by OHIP**.



When to Contact ODC Urgently

Seek immediate care if you experience:

- Rapidly expanding swelling or firmness beneath the chin (may indicate haematoma)
- Signs of infection: increasing redness, warmth, discharge, or fever above 38.5°C
- Significant difficulty breathing or swallowing
- Sudden numbness, weakness of the lower lip, or asymmetric smile that was not present before surgery

Questions to Ask Dr. Chitte

- Am I a good candidate based on my skin elasticity and anatomy?
- Is submental liposuction alone sufficient for my goals, or would I benefit from a combined procedure?
- What technique will you use, and will you use local or general anaesthesia?
- How many submental liposuction procedures do you perform annually?

This handout is for general information only. Please discuss your individual treatment plan, risks, and expectations with your surgeon.