

ASK DR. KATZEN



OH Magazine is pleased to present a series of articles featuring reader questions answered by expert plastic surgeon J. Timothy Katzen, MD, FACS. Do you have a question for Dr. Katzen? Send questions to AskDrKatzen@ObesityHelp.com and your question may be answered in a future issue.

I have heard that exercise can increase the amount of loose skin rather than help reduce it. Is this true? –**Tracy A.**

Dear Tracy,

It is almost impossible to decrease the amount of loose skin by exercising. Conceptually, you would have to exercise so much that the enlarged muscles take up the space previously occupied by fat. I have never seen this in my practice. On the contrary, I strongly encourage daily exercise for my patients, and I have never seen exercise increase the amount of loose skin. Most of my patients exercise routinely and are avid athletes; some even compete professionally in marathons and triathlons. None of them has developed looser skin from exercising.

I have already lost 63 pounds and would like to lose another 60 pounds. I would like to know how long I should wait to get a breast lift. Also, when is it recommended to go for the tummy tuck? Thank you. –**Martha**

Dear Martha,

I recommend reconstructive plastic surgery only after your weight has plateaued. Typically, this is 10 to 12 months for gastric bypass and 20 to 22 months after LAP-BAND.

Either way, your weight has to be within 10 pounds for three months before reconstructive plastic surgery. If you are planning to lose more weight, go ahead and do so. If, however, your weight has been stable for the past three months, then I would suggest reconstructive surgery. Typically, I perform my abdominoplasties and circumferential body lifts before breast lifts, because I get your tummy tucked so tightly that your breast fold actually drops several inches, so I wait for several weeks before I return and perform a breast lift. Thus, three to four months after your weight has leveled off, I would perform your tummy tuck. Then, four to six weeks after your tummy tuck or body lift, I would perform your breast lift.

I am interested in having breast reconstruction in the future. I had my RNY in August of 2005 and had been a 46DD for about ten years. I now wear a 34C and find that my breasts have no volume and are mostly composed of sagging skin. I want to know what reconstruction consists of and if I have to have implants. I would be more than satisfied to end up a B cup and do not really want

to have to resort to implants. Is that possible? –**Samantha A.**

Dear Samantha,

This is a very personal choice. If you have enough breast tissue to fold up your breast and make it a B size, then you may not need implants. If, however, your breast is composed mostly of breast skin and not breast tissue, there may not be enough to even create a B cup. Typically, most of my patients lose significant amounts of breast fat and usually require breast implants.

I had open RNY surgery. I'm only five months out so I'm not ready for plastic surgery yet. I do have a question though. My incision is quite large and has keloids. If I have a tummy tuck will that scar be eliminated and a newer, less obvious one take its place? –**Kathy**

Dear Kathy,

Your incision from your gastric bypass is not healed enough yet to tell. It takes approximately two years for a scar to fully mature. Five months is not enough time to determine if all your incisions will keloid. A keloid is a unique type of scar that is challenging to treat. At this point in time, I would apply a silicone gel cream or even silicone strips to your incision to optimize the eventual appearance of this scar. Other topical creams that do help include scar gel, aloe vera gel, and even cocoa butter. If the

scar is distressing to you at this point in time, I would even see a local physician about laser treatment for the scar. I would not be too distressed though; usually, I can completely excise the previous gastric bypass incisions with my tummy tucks or circumferential body lifts.



Congratulations, you got rid of the fat! Now, get rid of the extra skin by letting Dr. Katzen help you to complete your weight loss journey. 100 percent of Dr. Katzen's practice is devoted to reconstructive plastic surgery after weight loss. Dr. Katzen has a multi-disciplinary team to address the many issues concerning weight loss. We have an 80 percent rate of insurance approval. Please visit www.BodyByKatzen.com and call 1-888-KATZEN-0 for a consultation.

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