

# surgery after Weight Loss

BY GARRETT HARPER, MD

You've done the really hard part already. You exercised when it would have been so much easier to stay on the couch. You changed your diet when it was so hard to turn down those sweets. Some of you had surgery to help you get healthier and take control of your life. Your body responded. The weight dropped off. The muscle packed on. But the skin – that darn skin...

Working with patients who dedicated themselves to getting healthier and happier is a privilege. Being able to help them finalize their transformation to their new bodies is an honor. No matter where your stubborn skin has stayed, there is likely a procedure or surgery to make it better. Whether it's the face and neck, the tummy, the breasts, the arms, the thighs or the buttocks, at Graper Cosmetic Surgery, we have the answer. By providing safe and natural looking surgical solutions to your problem areas, we can assist you in completing your body makeover. Don't let your excess skin hold you prisoner and prevent you from truly embracing your dedication, your efforts and your accomplishments.

Here are some areas that are typical concerns for weight loss patients and our philosophy:

## FACE AND NECK:

The face and neck are the first thing you look at in the mirror and an area you are never able to hide (without a wardrobe full of turtle-necks). Often, weight loss patients struggle with loose skin and loss of volume in the face. While standard face and neck lifts may be your best solution, we also are the only cosmetic surgery office in Charlotte to offer a minimally invasive, state-of-the-art technology called ThermiRF that delivers controlled thermal energy to improve and tighten your skin.

Adjuvant dermal fillers like Juvaderm, Voluma and autologous fat grafting to the face can also help improve your face shape and restore a healthier, younger looking appearance.

## BREASTS/CHEST:

Often this area is one that really troubles weight loss patients. It's critical to consult with a board certified plastic surgeon that is familiar with weight loss patients and their specific conditions. There are certain strategies that need to be applied to the weight loss patient when it comes to all surgeries, but especially breast and chest surgery. Treating breast and chest surgery in the weight loss population the same as you would the general population is fraught with complications. You must discuss this, in depth, with your surgeon.

## ABDOMEN/"TUMMY":

Another major area of concern for the majority of weight loss patients is their abdomen. With major weight loss, there is a significant discordance between the amount of skin left over to drape over the now smaller musculoskeletal system. This is typically much different than the issues we, as surgeons, address in our abdominoplasty population of post-pregnancy women. Again, only board certified plastic surgeons that have a special understanding of the unique differences in the weight loss population can best address patients such as yourself.

## ARMS:

That loose "bat-wing" skin drives people crazy. Your arms are more muscular, they are smaller, there is less fat, but the loose skin is just too much to bare (no pun intended). Brachioplasty is a surgical technique in which that extra skin is removed and the scar is placed in as inconspicuous of a position as possible. For some, the ThermiRF may be a minimally invasive solution with a much smaller incision. If the scar is unavoidable, we have strategies to make it as unnoticeable and beautiful as possible. We know of no patient of ours that has felt the scar wasn't worth the tradeoff.

## THIGHS/BUTTOCKS:

Often these two areas go hand in hand. By a reduction in your weight and fat volume that kept these areas plump and overfilled, the sagging skin and lost volume now becomes an issue. While the ThermiRF may work for some, often a surgery is needed to remove the unwanted skin and restore a better contour and appearance. Autologous fat grafting to the buttocks can help restore lost volume and give your backside a better shape. Setting realistic post-operative expectations for these areas is critical and should only be addressed by a board certified plastic surgeon with experience in these particular circumstances.

If all or some of these areas concern you, schedule a consultation with one of the highly-qualified and well-respected surgeons at Graper Cosmetic Surgery. We are here to help you make an informed decision on reaching your goal and completing your physical and emotional journey.

*Dr. Garrett Harper, Graper Cosmetic Surgery, specializes in cosmetic surgery after weight loss, cosmetic breast and body surgery and breast reconstruction. You may contact Dr. Harper at 704.375.7111 or drharper@grapercosmeticsurgery.com.*

