

I am 26 years old and have a good body, except for some fat around my belly. Can I get body etching done for an instant six pack?

Abubaker W, Kerala

There is nothing instant in medicine or surgery. There is no substitute for a responsible diet and regular exercise. Since the area of fat deposit is restricted to the belly and is persisting despite a diet and regular exercise, you can opt for fine definition liposuction, but by a highly-skilled and experienced surgeon. The procedure should be followed by stomach crunches and some weight training under the direction of a good trainer. Please send photographs of the area for further advice.

DR MOHAN THOMAS, MD (USA), FACS (USA), leading cosmetic surgeon, visiting scholar Mt Sinai Hospital (New York) and consultant, Breach Candy Hospital, The Cosmetic Surgery Institute, Mumbai, answers your queries related to cosmetic surgery. Send in your queries to femina@wmm.co.in



I'm a 28-year-old woman, planning to get married in February 2012. I am 5'3" and weigh 80 kg, and I have no idea how this weight crept up on me. I have a desk job and have to travel a lot. I have a very healthy lifestyle but my only indulgence is food, which I find comforting, particularly when I'm under stress.

Sandhya N, Chandigarh

For any kind of treatment to be effective and the results to be maintained, one must have the resolve to change their lifestyle and exercise habits, which you are willing to do. A non-surgical option that is safe and medically proven is the use of an intra-gastric balloon, which can help you shed 10 kg to 20 kg. This is a 15-minute procedure, where the balloon is introduced through your mouth under light sedation. Needless to say, skills of the treating doctor are always important. The only known problem could be if you have any active Gastro Esophageal Reflux Disease (GERD). The balloon can stay for as long as six months and you must then be very responsible with your lifestyle.

I was scheduled to undergo liposuction for a spot reduction of my thighs, but I chickened out at the last minute because the surgeon said would be using an ultrasound device (UAL). I had read about it on the Internet and was scared about the side-effects. The surgeon claims this is different because

these are inserted under the skin to melt the fat. Please guide me.

S Gupta, Kolkata

In the absence of any records or photographs, it would be difficult to comment on your decision to have liposuction. I can understand your fear and your concerns, as some of them are well-founded. The UAL technology, which was first applied as an external paddle, reportedly caused a significant number of skin burns and other complications. The so-called new technology is quite similar, but it is introduced under the skin with probes and it liquefies the fat, sucking it out subsequently with a hollow tube and can cause similar problems. Remember, any new technology is not a substitute for the skills of the surgeon. Do your homework and seek a second opinion if you don't feel comfortable. This is elective surgery and nothing needs to be done in a tearing hurry.

I am a 19-year-old man with a 3" by 4", oval, dark and raised area on my left cheek. There is hair growing out of it. I am very conscious about it, but my family does not understand and thinks I am making a fuss about nothing. Please help.

Rakesh S, Indore

I can understand how you feel, but your family cares about you with or without the black mark. From what you describe, it sounds like a black hairy nevus or a mole. People are generally born with it and can grow bigger as you get older. The treatment of this nevus will require serial excision, as it is very large to be removed as a single piece. What this means is that this can be removed entirely in segments over a period of time and this treatment is quite successful. There may be a small residual scar. Please share this information with your family and they may call me if they wish. ●