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Body Contouring and Postpartum Rejuvenation: Bringing Out the Natural Beauty Within

AKRON, Ohio, May 1, 2007 – Imagine having gastric bypass surgery and shedding 250 pounds from your body. Or, think about the miracle of pregnancy and the joy of bringing a child into the world. Both of these are life-altering events to be celebrated, right?

Unfortunately, these momentous occasions sometimes have a downside, especially when the effect they have on a person's physical appearance can be devastating, according to Dr. Michael Parker of Akron Plastic Surgeons. The practice specializes in restorative procedures, like body contouring and postpartum rejuvenation.

"Losing hundreds of pounds is just the tip of the iceberg for most patients who undergo bariatric procedures like gastric bypass," said Dr. Parker. "More often than not, the patient's skin will hang loosely from their body following extreme weight loss. When people lose hundreds of pounds, the elasticity of their skin is affected and it won't return to its normal shape."

"In particular, this can leave a woman feeling out of balance with herself. It's not just about trying to be as beautiful as the women in the magazines and on TV," said Dr. John Pedersen of Akron Plastic Surgeons. In fact, studies show that Midwest women who seek changes in physical appearance want the results to be natural and in-tune with who they are on the inside, not because they're interested in perfecting their appearance to Hollywood standards.

"It's about this woman's body reflecting what she feels inside. In the case of a woman who has lost 50% of her body weight, she most certainly feels a sense of joy associated with her accomplishment — her outer appearance just isn't in sync with her inner joy," continued Dr. Pedersen.

A body contouring procedure removes excess skin from arms, legs and the torso. Most commonly, the process includes:

- Face lift to reduce sagging of the mid face, jowls and neck
- Breast lift to correct sagging, flattened breasts
- Tummy tuck to remove the apron of excess skin hanging over the abdomen
- Lower body lift to fix sagging of the abdomen, buttocks, groin and outer thighs
- Medial thigh lift to correct sagging of the inner and mid thigh
- Brachioplasty to eliminate sagging of the upper arms

There can be multiple procedures involved to complete the process. Typically, within 7 to 14 days, incisions are healed, and within a few weeks patients can return to normal activity.

"I knew there would be dramatic changes after having gastric bypass surgery," said Karri Rothgeb, an Akron Plastic Surgeons patient who recently completed the last phase of a body contouring procedure. "I wasn't prepared for how my skin would look after losing 200 pounds. Talk about having the wind taken out of your sails. I knew that losing the weight was a good thing, and I felt proud of the accomplishment. But every time I looked in the mirror, I felt hopeless. Now, I look in the mirror and I feel like the picture is complete. I've finally gotten to the happy ending part of the story."

“The same problem can happen to a woman following pregnancy, particularly when the woman has more than one child,” said Dr. Douglas Wagner of Akron Plastic Surgeons. “Things sometimes just don’t return to their former appearance – breasts sag, the stomach area gets stretched and mushy, etc. In that case, a postpartum rejuvenation procedure can make a dramatic difference.”

Postpartum rejuvenation typically involves combining a few procedures, like a tummy tuck, breast lift and liposuction, to correct some of the physical issues that result following childbirth. The process is less-involved than a complete body contouring procedure, so repeat surgeries may not be required; however, recovery time is roughly the same.

“I always try to remind my patients that there is no shame in wanting balance between your inner self and outer appearance,” said Dr. Wagner. “Some people see cosmetic surgery as being all about vanity. Sure, there are people out there who have procedures done because they want to emulate movie stars, but these people don’t represent the majority of patients who walk through our doors. Most patients just want to look in the mirror and see someone familiar looking back.”

The doctors of Akron Plastic Surgeons have been providing quality health care since 1985. A leading regional provider of cosmetic and reconstructive surgery, Akron Plastic Surgeons is composed of three board-certified physicians with over 50 years of combined experience: Michael G. Parker, M.D., Douglas S. Wagner, M.D., and John C. Pedersen, M.D., F.A.C.S. For more information, call 330.253.9161 or visit akronplasticsurgeons.com.

NOTE TO EDITORS: To arrange interviews with Akron Plastic Surgeons’ physicians or patients who have undergone the procedures highlighted in this article, please call contact. Photography is also available upon request.