Referral Guide for GPs

Body contouring after major weight loss, breast reduction and lift, and abdominal wall repair

Dear Doctor,

Thank you for referring your patient to Dr Rohit Kumar, specialist plastic surgeon. A referral is required for every patient. Several of the operations your patient may be considering have Medicare items with specific criteria, and Medicare and health fund eligibility depends on those criteria being documented. The information below, included in your referral or your notes, helps Dr Kumar assess eligibility accurately at the first consultation.

Please address the referral to **Dr Rohit Kumar, Specialist Plastic Surgeon**. Dr Kumar consults in Westmead, Penrith and Orange and operates at Westmead Private Hospital and Somerset Private Hospital, Kingswood.

For all patients

- ☐ Relevant medical history, including diabetes, cardiovascular and respiratory disease, sleep apnoea, previous venous thromboembolism and any bleeding disorder
- ☐ Current medicines, including anticoagulants, antiplatelets and GLP-1 medicines
- ☐ Nicotine use, including vaping. Patients must be nicotine-free for 8 weeks before and after body contouring, and 6 weeks for other operations
- ☐ Mental health history where relevant
- ☐ Recent full blood count, iron studies and HbA1c where available

After major weight loss

- ☐ Weight and BMI before weight loss, current weight and BMI, and height
- ☐ Method of weight loss: bariatric operation with date, GLP-1 medicine, or lifestyle
- ☐ The date weight became stable. Dr Kumar is happy to see patients once weight has been stable for a minimum of three months; the Medicare items require six months of stability by the time of surgery
- ☐ Functional problems caused by excess skin: intertrigo, recurrent infection, ulceration, hygiene difficulty, and interference with activities of daily living
- ☐ Treatment tried for intertrigo or infection, with dates. The items for abdominoplasty and circumferential lipectomy require intertrigo that has not responded to at least three months of conventional treatment
- ☐ Nutritional status after bariatric surgery: protein, iron, B12, vitamin D

Item	Operation	Main criteria
30166	Removal of redundant abdominal skin (wedge excision, panniculectomy)	At least five BMI points lost, weight stable for six months, functional problems. An alternative to 30177; the two are not claimed together
30177	Lipectomy with radical abdominoplasty	Intertrigo not responding to three months of treatment, interference with daily activities, weight stable for six months
30179	Circumferential lipectomy (body lift)	As for 30177, where the excision is circumferential
30169	Removal of redundant non-abdominal skin, one or two areas	As for 30166, for arms, thighs, back or chest. Chest includes male chest skin and lateral chest rolls after weight loss; female breast tissue is covered by the breast items below

Breast reduction and breast lift

- ☐ Symptoms attributed to breast size: neck, back or shoulder pain, bra-strap grooving, intertrigo, limitation of activity
- ☐ Treatment tried and its duration, for example physiotherapy, supportive bras, analgesia
- ☐ Current bra size and weight history
- ☐ Most recent breast imaging and any family history of breast cancer

Item	Operation	Main criteria
45523	Reduction mammaplasty, both breasts	Macromastia with neck or shoulder pain; no implant inserted
45520	Reduction mammaplasty, one breast	Breast cancer or a developmental abnormality of the breast
45558	Mastopexy (breast lift), both breasts, without implants	At least two-thirds of the breast, including the nipple, below the inframammary fold, with the nipple at the lowest point of the breast; pre-operative photographs required. Once per lifetime

No Medicare item applies when a breast implant is used, including a breast lift with implants.

Abdominal muscle separation after pregnancy

- ☐ Imaging (ultrasound or CT) showing separation of at least 3 cm
- ☐ Symptoms such as back pain, urinary incontinence or a bulge affecting function
- ☐ Physiotherapy undertaken and its duration
- ☐ Date of last pregnancy

Item	Operation	Main criteria
30175	Radical abdominoplasty with repair of rectus diastasis after pregnancy	Diastasis of at least 3 cm on imaging; documented pain or discomfort on functional use, or low back pain or urinary symptoms; conservative treatment including physiotherapy has failed; no pregnancy in the last 12 months. Once per lifetime. Not claimed with 30166, 30169, 30177 or 30179

Patients who have had children and also lost weight usually qualify under either 30175 or the weight-loss items, not both. Dr Kumar will advise which applies.

> Dr Kumar assesses Medicare eligibility at consultation; documenting the history above does not guarantee that an item applies. Referrals and correspondence: info@drkumar.com.au · 1300 267 726. Thank you for your referral.

