

Love handles? Freeze them off

By David Derbyshire

A MACHINE that 'freezes away' unwanted body fat to remove love handles, beer bellies and bingo wings has been developed by scientists.

The device, which is being promoted as a painless alternative to liposuction, features a gel patch that clamps on to flabby parts of the body and freezes fat cells.

The sub-zero temperatures cause the fat cells to die. They are re-absorbed and then flushed away by the body over the next few months, leaving the patient sleeker.

The first £80,000 'CoolSculpting' device has arrived in Britain and is already being offered to patients at a London clinic.

Liposuction - where fat is sucked from the body - is big business for cosmetic surgeons and has overtaken breast enlargement as the most popular type of plastic surgery.

The new treatment costs around £800 - about a quarter of the price of liposuction - and takes between one and three hours. The treatment, which is non-invasive, can be carried out in a patient's lunch break.

It was designed by scientists at Zeltiq in California. They realised that although fat freezes at a lower tem-



perature than other types of tissue, skin and muscles can survive sub-zero temperatures without suffering lasting damage.

Last week the treatment was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Mitchell Levinson, the company's founder, said patients have been monitored for three years

without the fat returning. A single treatment is usually enough for each love handle. A larger beer belly or a set of flaps of fat under the arms may need two treatments.

The device's creators say it is designed for those in need of a little fat removal and is not suitable for treating obesity.

The first machine in Britain is at the Beyond MediSpa clinic at Harvey Nichols in Central London.

A spokesman for the company said patients feel a sensation of 'intense cold', but this 'soon dissipates'.

He added: "The patient is seated comfortably or lying down during the procedure.

"Many spend this time reading or even taking a nap."

Debbie Scott, 60, an American living in London who went to Paris to have the treatment, said: "It's uncomfortable but not painful. For the next couple of days you touch the area and it's numb but after a month the bulge had shrunk."

Zeltiq has also created a device that uses a low-level laser to zap away fat cells around the waist and thighs.

It creates tiny pores in the fat cell membranes, allowing their contents to leak and causing the cells to deflate. The treatment lasts 40 minutes and is carried out three times a week for a fortnight.