

Freeze

By Anjana Gosai

TREATMENTS based on the concept of melting away fat cells with heat-based lasers have become commonplace. But the hottest new weight-loss procedure to arrive in the UK does the complete opposite — it freezes hard-to-shift flab to death.

Fresh from the U.S., this innovative machine goes by the name of Zeltiq, and uses a cooling method called cryolipolysis to target, chill and break down fat cells.

Developed by boffins at Harvard University and Massachusetts General Hospital, Zeltiq has proved a massive hit across the pond since being introduced a year ago — and now it's coming to the UK.

Experts are heralding the non-invasive procedure as a revolutionary new concept in weight loss.

'For years, we've been heating fat to melt it away,' says New York dermatologist Dr David Goldberg, who was involved in the clinical trials of Zeltiq. 'Now it appears that the opposite approach is more effective than other non-invasive procedures.'

Tests have shown that just one treatment is capable of destroying up to 25 per cent of fat cells in the area.

So how does it work?

'The cryolipolysis process gradually extracts body heat from the subcutaneous levels of fat (the layer that lies just under the skin),' explains Dr Goldberg.

'The temperature of the fat cells goes right down to zero degrees celsius — literally freezing them. Extremely low temperatures kill the fat cells without affecting either the skin or muscles. The dead cells are then removed naturally by the body through the liver.'


FOR THOSE with stubborn pockets of flab, the treatment could be a godsend. Patients are seeing impressive results on thicker and smaller areas of fat, such as love handles (the fat on the side of the hips), pot bellies and back rolls.

Unfortunately, Zeltiq is less effective at attacking larger zones of fat found around the bottom and thighs, but makers say they are working on an applicator to target these regions.

Those after a quick fix will be disappointed to learn that inch-loss is not immediate. It can take anything from two to three months for the dead fat cells to naturally leave the body through the urine, and results to appear.

Debbie Scott, an events organiser from Chelsea, West London, is one of the first in the UK to try Zeltiq. She says: 'I workout regularly and eat well, but the bulge of fat on my lower stomach area just doesn't respond to exercise, so this treatment seemed perfect for me.'

'During the hour-long session, a suction device was secured on to the fat on my tummy. When the machine was switched on, the fatty area was gently sucked up between the cooling panels. My skin



Instead of melting away your flab with a laser, the hottest craze from America is to FREEZE it to death

gradually became really cold and then went numb. I was told that this process slowly extracts energy from the fat, causing it to freeze, crystallise and die. It felt pretty uncomfortable, but it didn't hurt.'

'Afterwards, my stomach ached for a few hours and felt numb. I was still sore a week later, but the pain was bearable.'

'It's a shame that the results were not immediate, but I was assured that the fat will naturally leave the body over the next two to three months, and I should expect to lose around 40 per cent of what's there.'

'A month on, and I am amazed that I have already lost the chunk of flab on my lower tummy. I can even see my stomach muscles again. If the fat continues to drop off over the next few months, it will be fantastic.'

While doctors offering the treatment are

ff that fat



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singing its praises over procedures that use radio frequency and ultrasound technologies, other are sounding a note of caution.

Dr Roberto Viel, a cosmetic surgeon from the London Centre for Aesthetic Surgery, says: 'In principle, it seems very interesting and safe, but the question is: will the body be able to wash out all the destroyed fat?'

'Can the body cope with absorbing the damaged fat, metabolising and eliminating it with the urine?'

'If we are talking about a large amount of destroyed fat, then the liver could become overloaded and body could struggle, causing lethargy. I wouldn't

advise someone with liver problems to have a treatment like this.'

Nevertheless, with the buzz surrounding the treatment's arrival in the UK, the waiting list for Zeltiq is ever-growing.

'With no known side-effects or downtime, it's no surprise that Zeltiq has taken the U.S. by storm — we anticipate this treatment will be very popular with both men and women in the UK,' says Joanne Such, spa director of Beyond MediSpa, in London, who offer the treatment.

■ **ZELTIQ**, exclusively at Beyond MediSpa at Harvey Nichols, London, costs £800 per area. For details, call 020 7201 8595 or visit beyondmedispa.co.uk

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