

PRESS RELEASE

Improving Women's Healthcare: Public Insurance to Cover Liposuction for Lipedema Patients

Berlin, July 17, 2025 – “Today is a great day for all of us,” said Priv.-Doz. Dr. Mojtaba Ghods, spokesperson of the Lipedema Task Force of the German Society of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgery (DGPRÄC). Eleven years after the patient representative committee first submitted a request to the Federal Joint Committee (G-BA) to approve reimbursement for liposuction as a treatment for lipedema in publicly insured patients, the G-BA has now officially granted coverage, based on the results of the LIPLLEG study.

New framework for coverage

Dr. Ghods, who played a leading role in the study with his team at the Bad Belzig research center, added:

“I am proud that our years of hard work have paid off, and that patients, after years of fighting and living with stigma, are finally receiving the recognition they deserve from the healthcare system. No one should have to fall into debt or delay necessary medical treatment, which may cause the disease to progress.”

Dr. Ghods, who also accompanied the G-BA's review process until its conclusion, expressed particular satisfaction that the DGPRÄC's recommendation to include a four-eyes principle in the diagnostic process was adopted.

“This ensures that the diagnosis is not made solely by the operating physician. It's equally important that our long-standing recommendation was accepted to allow liposuction to treat not just the legs, but also the arms,” he emphasized.

He further noted that liposuction is now officially recognized as a treatment option for **all stages** of lipedema. This means many patients can now be spared prolonged suffering, while healthcare costs are reduced and patients' ability to participate in work and social life is preserved.

What is Lipedema?

“Lipedema is a chronic and painful fat distribution disorder that affects almost exclusively women,” explains Dr. Ghods. “It is characterized by a symmetrical accumulation of fatty tissue in the legs, hips, and arms, often accompanied by severe pain and heightened sensitivity to touch.”

Lipedema progression is classified into three clinical stages. In Stage I, patients typically experience early fat accumulation and pain. In Stages II and III, fat tissue increases significantly, with nodules and an uneven skin surface developing, eventually leading to lobular deformities that greatly impair mobility and quality of life.

“Importantly,” Ghods added, “the level of pain experienced by patients is not necessarily tied to the disease stage. Severe pain can occur in both Stage I and Stage III.”

Until now, public insurance only covered liposuction in **Stage III** cases, and even then, only under strict conditions. Despite the prevalence and severity of lipedema, coverage of surgical treatment had long been a matter of controversy.

LIPLEG Study: The Scientific Foundation

“To make an informed decision about insurance coverage, the G-BA commissioned the LIPLEG study in 2018,” said Dr. Ghods. “This was the world’s first multicenter, randomized, controlled, and blinded clinical study evaluating the safety and effectiveness of liposuction compared to conservative treatments for lipedema.”

The study included 450 participants and demonstrated that liposuction not only significantly improves patients’ quality of life but also sustainably relieves lipedema symptoms.

“The study is still in its follow-up phase, but the primary endpoint has already been met. The initial findings provided key scientific data used to assess the medical necessity of the procedure,” said Ghods. “I am proud to have been part of this important project.”

The G-BA Decision

“Based on the positive findings of the LIPLEG study, the G-BA has now decided to approve public insurance coverage for liposuction in lipedema patients, under specific conditions. This historic decision applies to all three stages of the disease,” Ghods explained.

Coverage requirements include:

- A confirmed diagnosis by two independent physicians (four-eyes principle)
- Stable weight or documented weight loss over six months
- Evidence that conservative treatments such as compression therapy and exercise were not sufficient

Dr. Ghods expects the final decision to be published soon. If the Ministry of Health approves it within four weeks, **liposuction could become fully reimbursable by October 2025.**

“This decision is a milestone in the care of women with lipedema,” Ghods concluded. “It gives patients access to a necessary and effective treatment, regardless of their financial means. It also underscores the importance of evidence-based medicine.”

He announced that the DGPRÄC will conduct a detailed review of the final decision once published, but emphasized that the most important outcome is that broad access to care is now within reach.

About Dr. Mojtaba Ghods

PD Dr. Mojtaba Ghods is Chief of the Department of Plastic, Aesthetic and Reconstructive Microsurgery and Hand Surgery at Ernst von Bergmann Hospital in Potsdam and Bad Belzig, Germany. He is internationally recognized as a pioneer in lipedema treatment, co-founder of the Lipedema World Alliance, and head of the Lipedema Working Group within the German Society of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgery (DGPRÄC). He authored the world’s first habilitation thesis on lipedema and hosted the 2023 Lipedema World Congress in Potsdam with over 500 participants from 30 countries.