

Double-Surgery Controversy

The death last year of Donda West, Kanye West's mother, raised concerns about combining breast and abdominal surgery in an outpatient operation. Russell B. Stokes, a plastic surgeon in Santa Barbara, California, has studied the risks of abdominoplasty with liposuction versus both procedures done with breast surgery, which takes longer. Out of 92 cases, 19.6 percent of the patients had complications; almost all were minor and self-resolving issues, but "interestingly enough," Stokes says, more complications affected the group that had fewer procedures. Also, abdominoplasty plus breast surgery poses no more risks than abdominoplasty, according to an analysis by Grant Stevens, associate clinical professor in plastic surgery at USC Medical School, who says that the procedures should be done by a board-certified plastic surgeon in a certified operating room. Outpatients need skilled caregivers after surgery, he adds, and those with existing medical conditions "may still need to be treated as inpatients."