



NATIVE AMERICAN BREAST CARE

BREAST REDUCTION SURGERY

What is breast reduction?

Breast reduction surgery (reduction mammoplasty) is designed to decrease the size and weight of large, heavy breasts.

Am I am candidate for breast reduction surgery?

Women who have neck, shoulder and/or back pain, experience grooves in their shoulders from the weight of their breasts, rashes beneath the breasts, inability to exercise due to the size of their breasts may be candidates for breast reduction surgery.

How is the surgery done?

The procedure is performed in a hospital under general anesthesia and takes three to four hours to perform. A keyhole shaped incision is made in the skin above the nipple/areolar complex (the darkened area of skin around the nipple). Excess breast tissue and skin is removed from both sides of the areolar complex to make a smaller breast. The surgery leaves a scar around the nipple/areolar complex, from the lower edge of the complex to the fold under the breast and in the fold under the breast. Most patients stay in the hospital overnight and go home the following day.

What are the possible risks and complications of this surgery?

In general this is a very safe procedure but certain complications may occur: because the nipple/areolar complex is being isolated from some of its original blood supply, it may lose some sensation or pigmentation (color). In cases where the breasts are exceptionally large, or if the complex does not appear to have good blood supply during the surgery, the complex is removed during surgery and sewn back on in its new position like a skin graft. It looks the same but does not respond to touch, temperature or sexual arousal. It is also at risk since the skin was moved. Some of the skin may die, especially around the edges. This is especially true of women who smoke so it is very important to

STOP SMOKING FOR AT LEAST TWO MONTHS BEFORE SURGERY AND ONE MONTH AFTER SURGERY. It is also very important if you are a diabetic to keep your blood sugars under control. The breasts may be slightly different in size and shape although not noticeably so. The scars described will fade with time although some women may form thick, raised scars. The ability to breastfeed may be lost – it is unpredictable. If this is very important to you, you may want to postpone surgery until after you have your family.

What can I expect after surgery?

You will be placed in a supportive bra in the operating room and will wear it continuously for the first two weeks. Postoperative pain is controlled with prescription pain medicine and after the first few days, ibuprofen or Tylenol type medications work well. Shooting or burning sensations are quite normal and will subside as you heal. You should avoid heavy lifting, pulling or pushing for the first two weeks. Walking, swimming and “non-bouncy” activities may be resumed within approximately three weeks. Running, jogging, and aerobic type activities should be avoided for the first three months.

When can I go back to work?

Most patients return to work at the end of the second week. If your job includes heavy lifting or other strenuous activities you will most likely be able to return within three to four weeks.

What will I look like after surgery?

Immediately after surgery, your breasts will be swollen, cone-shaped and somewhat high on the chest. Bruising after surgery is normal. The incision sites will have tape on them that we would like to remain for at least a few weeks. Occasionally, an area of redness and tenderness occurs where a dissolving stitch becomes irritated and pushes to the surface. The stitch may look like fishing line. This is not an emergency. The shape will slowly change during the first three months after surgery. The swelling will decrease and gravity will cause the breasts to drop to a more natural appearing teardrop shape. The shape will not be entirely stable until around six months after surgery. The scars will soften and fade over the first year or so.

What size will I be after surgery?

We will ask you for your ideal size although there are limitations to this depending upon the width of your breast on the chest wall, blood supply at the nipple/areolar complex and the amount of tissue volume in the breasts.

Can my breast “grow back” after surgery?

The surgery will only remove some of your breast tissue, not all of it. There could still be fluctuations due to your weight and subsequent pregnancies.

What do I do about mammograms?

You should not have a mammogram for 6 months after surgery so if you are 40 years old or older, you should schedule your mammogram with 6 months prior to surgery.

When can I shower after surgery?

You may shower 48 hours after the surgery. You will have tapes covering your incisions and you will leave these in place and pat dry after showering. You will need to wear a supportive bra at all times, but you may take it off to shower. You should avoid swimming or soaking for at least 2 weeks following the surgery.

Are there any medications that I should not take before surgery?

Certain medications may make your blood thinner or increase your bleeding/bruising. You should stop taking aspirin and ibuprofen at least 10 days before surgery. Other products that have been known to thin blood are: vitamin E, ginkgo biloba, garlic supplements, St. John's Wart.

What are signs of infection?

An oral temperature over 100.5

Yellow pus-like or foul smelling drainage larger than a dime size from the incision site

Increased pain/discomfort that is not relieved by your pain medication.

Helpful Hints:

- Have pre-made dinners on hand
- Have crackers or pretzels on hand to take with your medications if pain medications tend to upset your stomach
- Use paper plates and cups so that you do not need to wash dishes at first
- Bring items that you might need down from higher shelves so that you do not have to reach.
- Plan to wear button-down shirts, loose pants, slip-on shoes as it may be difficult to raise your arms up or bend at the waist for the first few days
- Have a phone within easy reach.
- Try to have someone available if you need errands run as you should not drive while taking pain medication or until your range of motion has improved so that you may steer a car or respond quickly.
- Try to have drinks in smaller than one gallon containers.
- Try sleeping on a recliner chair or with extra pillows in bed for support the first few days.
- Have someone close by the first time that you try to shower as some people are a little dizzy
- Do not tan at the incision lines for at least 6 months