

## Breast Reduction (Reduction Mammoplasty)

Breast reduction surgery can help to women with large breasts who experience neck and back pain and poor posture, while also boosting self-confidence.

The procedure can also help to rectify noticeable breast asymmetry.

### THE PROCESS:

Breast reduction surgery is carried out under a general anaesthetic with an overnight stay in hospital.

The procedure involves removal of excess breast tissue, while lifting the nipple and remaining breast tissue to restore a more youthful appearance. Liposuction may also occasionally be added to help improve the breast shape.

The skin wounds are closed with absorbable sutures and the resulting scars will soften and fade over the following months.

### AFTERCARE:

Following discharge from hospital, simple pain killers are usually all that is required. A vest top or soft support bra can help during recovery while the swelling settles. Often two weeks off work is sufficient and it is usually best to refrain from driving during this time. Follow up appointments are arranged by the hospital prior to discharge. The first at one week to see the specialist plastic surgery nurses and another at six weeks with your plastic surgeon to ensure all is well and that you are happy with your result.

## Breast Reduction (Reduction Mammoplasty)

Large breast size may be due to different factors, such as age (adolescence, menopause), hormones (including HRT treatment), height, weight and genetic inheritance. They may cause discomfort to the neck, back and shoulders due to their size, while also causing social embarrassment, difficulty with exercising and finding fashionable clothing.

A breast reduction operation makes the breasts smaller, by removing fat, breast tissue and skin. The remaining breast tissue and nipples are uplifted leaving smaller breasts. A breast reduction can also help to improve symmetry in uneven breasts.

Women with large breasts occasionally suffer with psychological difficulties due to feeling self conscious, both in public or during times of intimacy. As a result of this, it may often be beneficial to discuss personal expectations from surgery with our clinical psychologist (with whom we work very closely), prior to undergoing the procedure.

### BREAST REDUCTION SURGERY

On the day of your surgery, your surgeon will spend some time measuring, drawing on your breasts and going through the consent process with you. The operation is carried out under a general anaesthetic and takes approximately 3 hours and requires an overnight stay in hospital. Drains are rarely used.

The surgery involves removing excess fat, breast tissue and skin as well as lifting the nipple into a new position. The remaining skin and tissue are reshaped into a smaller and more uplifted breast.

There are different types of reduction, however most often the Wise pattern is used (The anchor-type or inverted-T reduction). This technique leaves a scar around the

circumference of the areola of the nipple, a vertical scar from the 6 o'clock position of the areola to the inframammary crease under the breast, and a horizontal scar in the inframammary crease.

Very rarely, if the breasts are exceptionally large or droopy, the nipple may have to be completely removed and replaced in its new position as a skin graft.

## CONSEQUENCES OF BREAST REDUCTION

There will be scars from the surgery, which will usually be pink and firm at first, but should soften and become paler over a period of 12 to 18 months.

After any surgery, there may be swelling, bruising and pain. This is common and can persist for a few weeks. Occasionally pre-existing neck and back pain may not be relieved by a breast reduction, however the surgery should prevent these pains and the stresses and strains on the spine from worsening.

Breast reduction surgery usually results in an inability to breast feed. It may be advisable to consider delaying surgery until 6 to 12 months after any future pregnancies/breastfeeding, to allow the breasts to return to normal.

Despite a breast reduction operation, occasionally breasts may continue to grow due to genetic/natural factors, or due to weight gains/losses, ageing, and pregnancy. This may result in the need for further surgery in the future.

## RISKS

As with all operations, there are potential complications which may occasionally occur with breast reduction surgery.

These may include such things as the loss of blood supply to skin, fat, breast tissue or the nipple during surgery causing these tissues to die (necrosis). This may affect the final result and require revisional surgery.

Occasionally, unnoticed asymmetries between the breasts may become more apparent after reduction surgery. These may improve as swelling and scars soften and mature, but occasionally revisional surgery may be needed.

The nipples, or breast skin may have increased or reduced (numb) sensation after surgery. These changes in sensation may be permanent.

Other complications that can occur with breast reduction may be associated with any type of surgery. These include such things as bleeding (haematoma), bruising, swelling, infection, seroma, skin breakdown or loss (necrosis), delayed healing, shooting pains, indentations, dog ears (at the ends of the scars), asymmetric healing, poor scarring (hypertrophic/keloid), chronic pain and the possible need for revision surgery.

There is also a risk of complications affecting general health after any surgical procedure such as allergic reactions, anaemia (and the need for a blood transfusion), deep venous thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, stroke, heart attack or death.

The breast tissue that is cut away during surgery is routinely sent to the pathology lab to be examined. rarely, a breast cancer may be found requiring further tests and treatment.

## EXPECTATION

Most women undergoing a breast reduction for the reasons of excessively large breasts which are too heavy and cause neck, back and shoulder pains are very happy with the final outcome.

## RECOVERY

Following a bilateral breast reduction procedure, there will be swelling and bruising, most of which should settle in the first few weeks. The scars may take about 2 weeks to heal, although may take several months to fully mature. While 2 weeks of sick leave may be sufficient for employment such as a desk-based job, it may be advisable to take a little longer for more physical work and refrain from heavy, upper body exercise for about 6 - 8 weeks. It is usually advisable to wear a sports type bra night and day for the first 2 - 3 months after surgery in order to support the breast.

>> [More information can be found on the BAAPS website by clicking here.](#)