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Breast Reduction: General Information

Procedure time	2.5 hours
General/local anaesthetic	General
Number of nights in hospital	1-2 nights
Time off work	2-4 weeks
Back to normality/sports	4-6 weeks
Back to Driving	2-4 weeks
Flights	3 weeks
Showering / Bath	5 days / 3 weeks

Introduction and Indications

The weight of large or pendulous breasts may cause a variety of medical problems such as back and neck pain, skin irritation and shoulder soreness from tight bra straps. Large breasts can also make a woman or a teenage girl feel extremely self-conscious. Breast reduction surgery aims to make smaller breasts which are more shapely and in proportion with the body.

There are many different techniques of breast reduction and so the position of the resultant scars may vary. There is always a circular scar around the nipple and a second vertical scar running from the nipple to the fold beneath the breast. A transverse scar is also created which runs along the fold beneath the breast; its length is dependent on the original size of the breasts. Breast scars are visible initially, but with time become fine, pale and flat.

The Operation

The operation is performed under a general anaesthetic and takes two and a half hours. After the operation the breasts are supported with dressings, and an unwired bra. Usually the patients stay in hospital for one or two nights. One week after the surgery when the dressings, are removed. The scars maybe left bare for gentle showering, massage E45 and topical silicone to optimise scar healing. All the remaining stitches run beneath the skin and do not need removal. They dissolve within eight to ten weeks and produce the finest scar lines.

Possible complications

Complications after breast reduction are not common. When they occur they are mostly a temporary nuisance rather than having a long term consequence.

A blood may accumulate in the breast after the surgery. This may need evacuation under a general anaesthetic. This has no long term effects on the outcome of surgery.

Patients experience altered sensation of the nipple (decreased or occasionally increased sensitivity) especially in the short term. In the vast majority of patients this sensation returns to normal within four to six months of surgery.

Wound healing can occasionally be problematic. This can lead to a small area of skin breakdown at the junction of the vertical and the horizontal scars. This problem is usually treated with regular dressings. Scars may be pink and dark for a while but usually settle with time, massage and silicone. Stretched scars may occasionally require revision at 6-8 months under local anaesthetic.

Occasionally a small area of the nipple can be lost. This is rare and occurs mainly in smokers or in very large breast reductions.

Asymmetry may persist when breasts are unclothed but not apparent in tight clothes and in underwear.

After the surgery

It is important to wear an unwired bra for six weeks in order to support the breasts as much as possible whilst they acquire their stable final shape. During the first two weeks following the surgery, excessive lifting, carrying and household activities should be avoided. For most occupations two weeks is necessary off work and strenuous exercise should be avoided for six weeks. Driving should be avoided until seat belts can be worn comfortably at 10-14 days post-surgery.

Breast reduction is usually an extremely satisfying procedure, improving the contour size and shape of the bust and restoring body proportion. Many women feel more confident and are relieved of the physical discomfort of large breasts.

There is no guaranty of final cup size but with meticulous planning and measurements, we endeavour to achieve a comfortable and confident bust cup size commensurate with the vest and your physique.