

BREAST REDUCTION

APPROXIMATE COST: \$4,600-\$7,975

There may be additional changes for surgical facilities and anesthesia. Be sure to request this information.

APPROXIMATE TIME UNTIL COMPLETELY HEALED: One to three months. The scars will take at least a year to fade out to their minimal color.

PRESURGICAL INSTRUCTIONS

- You will be given blood and lab tests prior to surgery. Your doctor will send you for x-rays and mammograms. Do not take any aspirin or aspirin containing products; they can cause bleeding and bruising. See list of medications to avoid for two weeks prior to your surgery and one week after. You may take Tylenol.
- If you take medication daily, notify your doctor. Also inform him if you develop an illness, a cold or any skin infections within a week of your surgery.
- Take an iron supplement at least one month prior to surgery, as well as one month afterward. (Such as a multivitamin with Iron).
- If you're a smoker you should clearly understand that nicotine could impair and delay healing. Most offices will suggest quitting a week to ten days before surgery, a week post-op. If it were me, I'd stop smoking a minimum of three weeks prior to surgery, and not touch a cigarette for a full month post-op. Who needs to be left with scars worse than normal and other complications as a result of smoking through the pre- and postsurgical period?

THE DAY BEFORE SURGERY

Do not eat or drink anything after midnight.

THE DAY OF SURGERY

- You may rinse and brush your teeth, but *do not eat or drink anything*. Some offices may ask you to take pills with a small amount of water the day of surgery. Do not bring any jewelry or valuables. Wear a robe, housecoat or warm-up suit that buttons or zips in the front, and wear flat shoes. PJ's and some nice warm socks work the best. *No tight fitting clothes*.
- *Someone must drive you home the day of your surgery and stay with you the first night.*
- Postoperative instructions regarding activity, medications and office visits will be given following your surgery.

THE SURGERY

The surgery takes about three hours. Add an additional half-hour for preparation and anesthesia. There are usually four people in the operating room with you: the surgeon, the anesthesiologist and two surgical nurses.

Breast reduction is exactly what it implies. It reduces the size and shape of large, hanging breasts, and reduces the nipple size if necessary. It relieves the weight-induced pain in your breasts, neck, shoulders and back, and enhances your appearance by giving your body more balanced proportions.

Horizontal and vertical incisions that follow the breast contour are made, with a circular incision at the top of the vertical section to receive the nipple once the breast is lifted up. Working through the incisions, the surgeon removes excess fat, tissue and skin, along with the skin within the vertical section. If the nipple needs reducing, the skin on both sides of the breast is brought down and around the areola, then sutured together to reshape the breast. You will have sutures around the entire areola, straight down the bottom half of the breast, and clear across the under-breast crease. The sutures and steri-strips will be removed in two weeks.

An alternative surgical process is to fully detach the nipple and nipples base from the breast and then surgically relocate it. However, a transplanted nipple becomes totally void of feeling and sensation, so most doctors prefer to avoid this procedure if possible.

POSTSURGICAL INSTRUCTIONS

- Rest quietly for one or two days, then engage in only Very light activity for at least ten days.
- Do not resume aspirin products for at least ten days after surgery.
- Wear a supportive bra 24 hours a day for six weeks. (Remove the bra to shower.)*
- You may shower over the stitches, gently patting dry.
- Approximately seven to ten days after your breast surgery, a return to the office for suture removal will be scheduled.
- Strenuous activity (sports, aerobics, manual labor) should be curtailed for one month. Activity of the upper extremities should be restricted to the limits of comfort for six weeks. Avoid lifting anything more than five pounds for the first two weeks following surgery. No driving, no sudden movements, no heavy housework, no reaching for top shelves for at least ten days. If you blow your hair dry, keep the dryer at a low angle for a couple of weeks. Thereafter, gradually resume normal activity.

THE RECOVERY PERIOD

You'll experience some pain during the first three to four days; it can be managed with prescribed medication. You'll remain sore for about three to four weeks, and Tylenol should get you through that period. You'll be wearing a surgical bra for support for six weeks post-op.

Any swelling and bruising should pass within two to three weeks. The scars will rise up and turn bright pink before flattening out. Expect the scars to be extremely obvious for a year post-op. They will eventually begin to fade a bit, but they will always remain apparent. It's a trade off beautifully sized and shaped breasts, but with permanent scars. However, all of these scars will be completely undetectable under a bra, bathing suit or strapless evening dress.

Wait at least three weeks for the swelling to subside before you run out and purchase a new bra wardrobe.

PROBLEM SIGNS

If there is any bleeding from incision lines or indications of infection, call your doctor immediately. Severe pain could indicate blood clots that will need to be surgically removed. Any ballooning, pinkness, warmth, tingling or several swelling should be considered a possible problem.

If any incision line really thickens up and turns red, you may be developing a keloid. See your doctor *immediately* for treatment. Don't wait! The scar needs instant attention.

If you notice any remarkable asymmetry developing, call your doctor and have him examine you A.S.A.P.

MAKEUP TRICKS

If your scars are completely healed and dry, they may be safely camouflaged approximately one week following suture removal with a foundation that matches your skin tone. Dermablend, Physicians Formula Velvet Film, Max Factor Pan Stick, Clinique Continuous Coverage, Prescriptives Camouflage Creme, or Nature Cover all are good choices for scar coverage.