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*AESTHETIC & RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY
CERTIFIED BY THE AMERICAN BOARD OF PLASTIC SURGERY
MEMBER AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PLASTIC SURGEONS*

Frequently Asked Questions about Breast Reduction

Is breast reduction surgery covered by insurance?

Every insurance company has different guidelines when it comes to covering the costs of breast reduction surgery. From the insurance company's point of view, breast reduction surgery is very similar to a "breast lift," which they consider to be a cosmetic procedure. In order for your procedure to be covered, you generally have to show that you have been suffering from breast weight-related symptoms, and it must usually be documented and supported by your primary care doctor. You also usually need to show that you have tried non-surgical treatments to relieve your symptoms, such as physical therapy, chiropractic treatment, use of special support/sport bras, etc. Your insurance company will then take all of this into account along with the assessment by your surgeon and supporting photographs to determine whether or not you'll be covered. If you are denied coverage by your insurance company, you will still have the option of undergoing the procedure by paying "out of pocket." We can give you estimates on these costs should it become necessary.

Can I choose my cup and breast size?

We cannot guarantee breast or cup size after surgery. Breast "cup" sizes are highly variable based on different bra manufacturer interpretations (Victoria's Secret cup size "C" may not be the same size as a JC Penny cup size "C"). If you tell us what size you would like to achieve, it will help guide us, but the final result may be different. The goal of breast reduction surgery is to reduce the size of your breasts and improve your symptoms, not to achieve a specific breast size.

Will I need any more visits before surgery?

Although it is not necessary, you may meet with Dr. Gutowski before your surgery to answer any questions and review the procedure. You will also need to have a "History & Physical Exam" a few weeks before surgery which will be done by Dr. Gutowski's assistant (or it may be done by your primary care physician). You may schedule a meeting with Dr. Gutowski the same day to answer any questions.

Where will the procedure be done?

Depending on scheduling availability and the length of your surgery, the procedure may be done at a hospital or a surgery center.

What kind of anesthesia will I have?

Most patients have general anesthesia and are completely asleep during the procedure. In some cases, the procedure may be done with deep sedation. Occasionally, it can be done with minimal sedation.

How long does the procedure take?

The surgery usually lasts 2 to 3 hours but the actual time in the operating room may be up to 3 ½ hours to allow for preparing you for the procedure.

Will I go home the same day?

Yes, you should plan on going home the same day.

Will I have any drains after surgery?

In most cases, Dr. Gutowski does not use drains after breast reduction.

What medications will I need after surgery?

You will receive a prescription for a pill containing a narcotic and **acetaminophen** (Tylenol) combination. The day **after** your surgery, you may also start using **ibuprofen** (Motrin) or **naproxen** (Aleve) which can be obtained before your procedure without a prescription. Most patients stop using the narcotic pills after 2 to 3 days and change over to **acetaminophen** alone or with **ibuprofen** or **naproxen**.

Will I need any special bras?

Most patients have a surgical bra placed after surgery and should wear it for at least 1 week. It may be removed for 15 minutes twice a day as needed during the first week and for 30 minutes twice a day during the second week. You may wear a sports bra (without underwires) after 1 to 2 weeks and then purchase new bras as you desire after 2 months or after the swelling has resolved.

How often will I need to come back after surgery?

Dr. Gutowski or his assistant will see you within 3 days after surgery and again after 1 to 2 weeks, 4 to 6 weeks, and after 3 to 4 months. If you would like to be seen at any other time, Dr. Gutowski will be happy to do so.

Will there be any sutures to remove after surgery?

In most cases, there are no sutures to remove.

What are my restrictions after surgery?

You may remove the surgical bra and shower the second day after surgery but be very gentle with your breasts for the next 2 weeks. Light regular activity is allowed during the first week but should be limited if it causes discomfort. Avoid heavy straining or lifting more than 10 pounds (about the weight of a gallon of milk). You should sleep on your back for the first 1 to 2 weeks. Do not drive if you are using narcotic pain medications. After 2 weeks you may resume regular activity as tolerated.

How long before I can return to work?

Most patients can return to work in one week. If you need to do moderate or heavy activity, you may need to wait 2 weeks before returning to work.

Will I need any therapy after surgery?

No, just be sure to move your arms in a full range of motion three times a day in a slow and gentle manner after surgery to prevent stiffness. Start this the third day after surgery.

Will I have scars following surgery?

Proper breast reduction surgery cannot be achieved without the use of incisions and scars. There will be scars around the areola (colored part of the breast around the nipple) and down from the areola underneath the breasts. Additionally, you will likely have scars all the way across the undersurface of each breast, hidden near the creases that extend out toward your armpits to some degree. These scars are generally well-tolerated by patients

What can I do to minimize scars after surgery?

Silicone gel sheets have been shown to improve scar appearance after surgery. Please refer to our Incision, Scar, and Wound Management Information document

How will breast reduction affect future mammograms?

Tell your doctor and mammography technician that you have breast reduction surgery. If you are less than 40 years old, you may wait until that time before having a mammogram (unless your primary care doctor recommends otherwise). If you are 40 years old or older, ask your primary care doctor to obtain a new “baseline mammogram” 6 to 12 months after surgery.

Can I breast feed after breast reduction surgery?

In most cases, women can breast feed after a breast reduction, but they may need to supplement feedings with formulas. However, even if you breast fed in the past, there is no assumption that you will be able to in the future. The ability to breast feed after surgery is unpredictable.

Will breast reduction surgery increase my risk of getting breast cancer?

No. Your risk of getting breast cancer is not increased by undergoing breast reduction surgery. However, in a small number of patients (less than 1%), a previously undetected breast cancer may be found in the breast tissue following your breast reduction surgery. If this happens, a plan will be made with you on how to treat your discovered breast cancer.

Can you make my breasts the exact same size using surgery?

It is extremely rare for patients to have perfectly symmetric breasts before or after surgery. You may have some degree of asymmetry following surgery, though every attempt is made to make the breasts as symmetric as possible during surgery.