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## **Mastopexy (Breast Lift) – Patient Information**

A mastopexy, also known as a breast lift, is an operation that reshapes and lifts the breasts by removing excess skin and tightening the surrounding tissue. It does not involve implants unless combined with augmentation. Although the procedure is common, it is still major surgery, and the results cannot be guaranteed.

### **What to Consider Before Having a Mastopexy**

A mastopexy:

- Lifts and reshapes the breast
- Repositions the nipple and areola to a more youthful height
- Removes stretched or excess skin

It does **not** increase breast size, unless combined with implants. On the contrary, when excess skin is removed, the breast size might decrease slightly.

Your surgeon will assess:

- The amount of excess skin
- The degree of sagging (ptosis)
- Nipple position
- Skin quality
- Whether additional volume (implants) might be needed to achieve your goals

### **What does a Mastopexy involve?**

Mastopexy surgery is carried out under general anaesthetic.

The surgeon will need to know if you are taking any medication that thin the blood such as aspirin, clopidogrel, warfarin or rivaroxaban or medicines that reduce your immunity or ability to heal.

The operation typically involves:

- Making incisions (around the areola, vertically down, and sometimes along the breast crease depending on your case)
- Lifting and reshaping the breast tissue
- Repositioning the nipple and areola
- Removing excess skin
- Tightening and reshaping the breast
- Closing the incisions with stitches and applying dressings

The operation takes between 2 to 3 hours.

You may be able to go home the same day but may need to stay in hospital depending on the complexity of the surgery.

You'll be given pain relief if you experience any discomfort afterwards.

### **What to Expect After a Mastopexy?**

You should be able to move around soon after the surgery.

It can take a few weeks to fully recover from surgery, so you should take a week or 2 off work. You should drive when you feel safe to do so, but not before 1 week.



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Your surgeon may recommend wearing a compression garment 24 hours a day for up to 6 weeks after breast lift surgery (check with your surgeon).

Avoid heavy lifting or strenuous exercise for 6 weeks.

After 1 or 2 weeks: Your stitches will be removed (unless you had dissolvable stitches).

After 6 weeks: You should be able to return to most of your normal activities. Your scars should also start to fade. Mastopexy scars will usually fade but never disappear entirely.

After a few months: Your breasts should start to look and feel more natural.

### **What Can Happen After a Mastopexy?**

Certain issues may occur following a Mastopexy surgery:

- Thick or visible scarring
- Wound breakdown (especially along vertical or T-shaped scars)
- Delayed wound healing
- Fat necrosis (firm lumps caused by low blood supply)
- Nerve problems in the nipples – they may become more sensitive, less sensitive, or completely numb; this can be temporary or permanent. Both nipples can react differently
- Asymmetry between breasts
- Difficulty breastfeeding due to surgical disruption of ducts
- Very rarely, partial or total nipple/areola loss (higher risk in smokers or with large lifts)
- Interference with Sentinel Lymph Node Mapping Procedures - Breast surgery procedures that involve cutting through breast tissue, similar to a breast biopsy, can potentially interfere with diagnostic procedures to determine the lymph node drainage of the breast tissue in the staging of breast cancer.

Also, any type of operation carries a small risk of:

- Bleeding and clots – blood clots can be life threatening
- Infection – this is rare and would need to be treated with antibiotics.
- An allergic reaction – to medicine or products used during surgery, such as antibiotics or latex

Your surgeon should be able to tell you more about these problems, including how likely they are and how they'll be corrected if you have them.

### **Breast Screening (Mammograms) After Mastopexy**

You should continue regular breast cancer screening.

Mammograms are safe after mastopexy. Inform the radiographer about your surgery, as modified positioning may be required.

### **Smoking and Surgical Risks**

#### **Smoking increases the risk of complications both during and after cosmetic surgery.**

Chemicals in cigarettes restrict blood vessels and reduce the amount of oxygen carried in your blood. This can affect your safety during the operation and your healing afterwards.

#### **Risks During Surgery**

Smoking can lead to:

- Reduced oxygen delivery to tissues, making the procedure riskier
- Higher risk of anaesthetic complications, including breathing difficulties
- Poor blood flow, which can affect the body's ability to tolerate the surgery
- Increased risk of skin and tissue damage during procedures that rely on good circulation



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## Risks After Surgery

Smoking also significantly increases the risk of:

- Delayed wound healing
- Infection at the surgical site
- Poor scarring or widened scars
- Skin or tissue loss (necrosis), especially in procedures involving skin flaps

To reduce these risks, patients are strongly **advised to stop smoking (including e-cigarettes and nicotine-containing products) for at least 6 weeks before and after surgery.** Quitting allows your circulation and oxygen levels to improve, supporting safer surgery and better healing.

### What if I have concerns?

You should contact the ER or the ward, as instructed prior to discharge if you have severe pain or unexpected symptoms.

Cosmetic surgery results may not always meet your expectations. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you can discuss this with your surgeon.