

Breast Augmentation

What to expect and how to prepare

This handout describes what to expect, how to prepare for your surgery, and how to plan for your recovery.

About Your Surgery

To augment your breast, we will place implants filled with saline or silicone beneath your breast and *pectoralis* muscle. This muscle connects the front wall of your chest with your upper arm and shoulder bones. Your surgeon will do this surgery through a small incision in the natural crease beneath your breast.

Talk with your doctor about the results you want. You can bring photos to show the basic breast size and shape you would like. Your doctor will answer your questions, explain options, and talk about your goals and expectations.



Talk with your doctor about the results you want from your surgery.

How to Prepare for Your Surgery

Things to Remember

- Do **not** take any aspirin or aspirin-like products for 1 week before your surgery. (See attached sheet for more information.)
- Do not shave any part of your body that you do not already shave every day. If you normally shave near your surgical site, do **not** shave that area for 2 days (48 hours) before your surgery.
- You might have a **mammogram** if it has been more than 1 year since you have had one, regardless of your age.
- You will need to have a **second mammogram** 9 months after your surgery. This one will show the scar tissue that has formed after your surgery. Your healthcare providers will consider this mammogram your new baseline and will compare all future mammograms to it.

24 Hours Before Your Surgery

At Home

- **Take 2 showers:** Take 1 shower the night before, and a 2nd shower the morning of your surgery:
 - Use the antibacterial soap your nurse gave you to wash your body.
 - Do **not** use the antibacterial soap on your face and hair. (See directions that came with the soap.) Use your own soap and shampoo on your face and hair.
 - Use clean towels to dry off, and put on clean clothing.
- **Arrival time:** The pre-surgery nurse will call you by 5 p.m. the night before your surgery. If you are having surgery on a Monday, the nurse will call you the Friday before. If you do not receive this call by 5 p.m., please call 206.598.6334.
- The nurse will tell you when to come to the hospital and will remind you:
 - Not to eat or drink after a certain time
 - Which of your regular medicines to take or not take
 - To sip only enough water to swallow your pills
 - That a responsible adult must take you home

At the Hospital

- **Heating blanket:** While you wait to go into the operating room, we will cover you with a heating blanket to warm your body. This helps reduce your risk of infection. Please ask for a heating blanket if you do not receive one.

After Surgery

Precautions and Self-care to Speed Your Recovery

Medicine given during and after your surgery will affect you. For 24 hours after your surgery do **not**:

- Drive or travel alone
- Use machinery
- Drink alcohol
- Sign any legal papers or make important decisions
- Be responsible for the care of another person

Incision Care

- You will have a small incision in the natural crease beneath each breast. There will be stitches under your skin and strips of white tape (Steri-Strips) over your incisions. Keep the Steri-Strips on until they fall off. Remove them after 2 weeks if they are still on.
- Panty liners work well as a dressing (bandage). They are thin, they absorb well, and they are low-cost. Use panty liners over your incisions as needed. Be sure to use unscented ones.

Wearing a Bra

- Your doctor will decide if you need a surgical bra. If you are given one, keep it on 24 hours a day for 3 to 4 weeks. Take it off only when you shower. If your doctor decides you do not need a surgical bra, you can still wear one. Or, wear what is comfortable.
- Do **not** wear an underwire bra until your incisions are fully healed.

Sleeping

Sleep on your back for the first 3 to 4 weeks, whether or not you are wearing a surgical bra. After that, you may sleep on your side or stomach.

Shower

- You may start taking showers 48 hours after your surgery. Wash very gently and use mild soap on your incisions or over your Steri-Strips.
- Do **not** take a bath, sit in a hot tub, or go swimming until your incisions are fully healed.

Going Home

You will go home the day of your surgery. You will not be able to drive yourself. Make sure you have a responsible adult who can drive you home, or ride with you in a bus or taxi.

Activity and Return to Work

- Do **not** lift, pull, or push heavy objects for 2 weeks after your surgery. If doing something hurts or pulls on your incisions, stop what you are doing.
- Add activities as your comfort level allows.
- Most people take 1 or 2 weeks off work to recover.

Pain Control

- You will be given a prescription for pain medicine. Take this medicine exactly as it was prescribed.

- The first 12 to 24 hours after surgery are usually the most painful. After that, you may need less or none of the prescription pain medicine. You may only need medicine you can buy without a prescription, such as extra-strength acetaminophen (Extra Strength Tylenol).
- It is normal to have muscle soreness or sharp, shooting pain for 2 weeks after surgery.

Swelling

For the first 2 to 3 days, you may use ice packs over your whole breast area to lessen swelling, pain, and bruising.

- Wrap the ice packs in a towel or cloth to protect your skin. Do not place ice directly on your skin.
- Apply the ice packs for 20 minutes each hour.

When to Call

Call your doctor or nurse if you have:

- A fever higher than 100.5°F (38°C)
- Chills
- Shaking
- Any sign of infection:
 - Redness
 - Severe pain that is not helped by your pain medicine
 - Swelling
 - Bad-smelling drainage
 - An increase in the amount of drainage from your wound
- Nausea or vomiting, or both
- Concerns that cannot wait until your follow-up visit

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call the Center for Reconstructive Surgery at 206.598.1217, and press 8.

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206.598.6190 and ask for the resident on call for your surgeon to be paged.