

Lipo-modelling (fat transfer) in breast surgery

Breast reconstruction



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What is Lipo-modelling?

Lipo-modelling or fat grafting (sometimes called lipofilling or fat transfer) is a procedure used to try to improve the shape or size of the breast. It can be used on patients who have had a breast reconstruction or patients who have had a lumpectomy.

What does it involve?

Fat is taken from your own body, often the abdomen, thighs, or hips, in a procedure called liposuction (removal of fat). The fat is removed through small cuts into the skin. The removed fat cells are then separated from the body fluid using special equipment and then inserted into the area to be treated.

This procedure is performed under a general anaesthetic. The procedure will usually have to be repeated several times until your breast is the size/shape required.

Will I need to come into hospital?

The procedure is usually carried out as a day case procedure, so you will come into hospital in the morning and go home in the afternoon.

Are there any side-effects or complications?

- You will have a lot of bruising and maybe swelling at the area where the fat is removed. This will take a couple of weeks to settle. You are advised to bring supportive underwear into hospital to help reduce swelling and bruising and they should be worn until the bruising settles. These can be bought from most high street stores.
- Infection or inflammation (reddening of the skin) can occur after surgery at the site the fat has been removed or injected.
- Some of the fat injected into your breast may disappear over time and the procedure will usually need to be repeated several times.
- Fat necrosis may occur in the breast area (this is a hard lump caused by fat).

- Your breast may be an uneven shape until you have had all your treatments.

- Your breast may never get to the size or shape you would like using this procedure, but it should improve the appearance of your breast.

What are the benefits of this procedure?

This procedure can improve the cosmetic look of your breast without you having to have a bigger operation.

Are there any alternatives?

Breast reconstruction may be an alternative. You need to discuss your options with your surgeon or breast care nurse.

How long will it take to recover?

The surgery is done in the operating theatre, usually as a day-case.

You should rest for 24 hours and then increase your activity.

Normal activity can be resumed after two to three days. Heavier activities will take longer.

All stitches will be dissolvable. Paper stitches may also be used.

Pain

You may be uncomfortable after the procedure. You should take your usual pain killers if required.

Driving

Usually after about a week or when you are comfortable to drive again.

Who do I contact if I have any problems?

Contact your breast care nurse specialist Monday to Friday on 01935 384 352.

If you would like this leaflet in another format or in a different language, please ask a member of staff.

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