

*What to expect...*

## After your breast reduction surgery

Once you have returned home from having your breast reduction surgery, it is time to relax and let your body heal. If possible, plan to spend about two inactive weeks at home engaging in light activities such as reading and watching television. It might be a good idea to gather a supply of your favorite books, magazines and DVDs.

In addition, it might be helpful to:

- Stock the house with easy-to-fix meals, like frozen dinners. Get bendable straws and canned drinks instead of heavy 2-liter bottles.
- Get soft ice packs or have packages of frozen peas available to apply to sore areas.
- Put plates, cups, and other frequently used items in low, easy-to-reach places.
- Put pet food in smaller containers to avoid lifting heavy bags at feeding time.
- Have slip-on shoes or slippers that don't require bending down, as well as button-front tops that don't need to be pulled over the head.
- Get a seamless cotton sports bra that hooks in front
- Have plenty of pillows on hand.

### Pain and Discomfort

There may be some pain during the first day or two after the procedure. Moving around and coughing may make the pain worse. On the day of surgery you will be given a prescription for medication to control pain and discomfort. Breasts will ache and feel tender for a couple of weeks. The first menstruation after the operation may also cause pain and swelling in the breasts.

The best method of managing postoperative discomfort during the first 24 hours following your breast reduction surgery is by taking 1 or 2 pills every 3 to 4 hours. By doing this, you are preventing pain from occurring rather than trying to decrease it once it has started bothering you. After 24 hours, please take your pain medication only as needed. Try to switch yourself over to Tylenol (acetaminophen) as the intensity of your discomfort decreases.

### Bandages

The bandages are removed 4 to 7 days after the operation by Dr. Zelt or his nursing staff. After this visit, you may begin showering normally. There will be short tapes on your skin (Steri-Strips) that will remain in place for at least 10 days. You will remove the Steri-Strips 1 week after your dressings are removed. They are easily removed in the shower when the tapes are moistened. Remember, YOU must remove the Steri-strips, they will NOT fall off themselves.

## Bleeding

During the first day or two following your surgery, it is normal of have some bleeding into your dressing. Please do not be concerned. A small to moderate amount of fluid or blood draining from the wound is normal. However, if there is severe pain or a large amount of breast swelling, please contact our office.

Do not take aspirin, vitamin E supplements or ibuprofen. Review the list of medications, supplements and foods given to you during your consultation visit and avoid them for 1 week postoperatively.

## Sleeping

In order to allow your breasts to heal as quickly as possible, try and sleep on your back for the first week following your surgery. Once your dressing is removed, you can return to your normal sleeping habits if you are comfortable doing so.

## Sensation

It is normal for the area around the nipple and lower breast to feel different after the surgery. It usually returns to normal in a few weeks to months, though in some patients can take much longer.

## Returning to work

Healing from breast reduction varies from patient to patient. The stress and strain of surgery leaves many people feeling fatigued for several weeks. Most patients can usually get back to light work in 2 to 4 weeks. Other patients want to return to work as soon as possible and they are able to resume their working activities 3 to 4 days after their breast reduction.

## Extras

- Avoid exercising and sporting activities for 1 month.
- Avoid smoking for 1 month and alcohol for 1 week. They both delay healing and raise your risks of hematoma and infection.

## How Long Until Full Recovery?

Your breasts do not achieve their final shape immediately after surgery and may take up to six months for everything to settle down. The scars from breast reduction surgery are noticeable and permanent, and they can remain lumpy and red for months. Most scars will become less noticeable over time and most often fade to thin white lines. The scars are limited to the lower part of the breast and therefore will not show under low-cut tops and bathing suits.

It may take a while to adjust to the new look. **Breast reduction surgery has the highest patient satisfaction rate of any of the cosmetic procedures. Nearly every woman who has this procedure is pleased with the outcome.**

## If you have a problem

Please call my office at 514-933-3449 with any questions or concerns following your surgery. You may call my cellular phone at 514-983-1556 if you have urgent concerns. In case of an emergency, please go directly to the emergency department of the hospital where you had your surgery and have the attending physician page me.

## Postoperative Visit with Dr. Zelt

Please call my office at 514-933-3449 to make arrangements to see me within 4 to 7 days following your surgery or if you have any questions regarding your care.