

Breast Lift

Mastopexy



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
PLASTIC SURGEONS®

What is a Breast Lift?

A woman's breasts often change over time, losing their youthful shape and firmness.

These changes and loss of skin elasticity can result from:

- Pregnancy
- Breastfeeding
- Weight loss
- Aging
- Gravity
- Heredity

A breast lift, also known as a mastopexy, raises the breasts by removing excess skin and tightening the surrounding tissue to reshape the breast and create a new breast contour. Sometimes the areola (darker skin area around the nipple) becomes enlarged over time and a breast lift may reduce and reshape this as well.

A breast lift can be done on its own or in combination with breast implant placement (breast augmentation).

Breast lift surgery is a good option if:

- You are physically healthy
- You have realistic expectations
- You are bothered by the feeling that your breasts sag or have lost shape and volume
- When unsupported, your nipples fall below the breast crease
- Your nipples and areolas point downwards
- You have stretched skin and enlarged areolas
- One breast is lower than the other

Breast lift surgery is a highly individualized procedure and you should do it for yourself, not for someone else.



Breast Lift and Breast Augmentation Surgery

Many women who want to improve the look and size of their breasts want to better understand the differences between breast lift surgery and breast augmentation surgery. While they are often done as part of a single surgical procedure and are both designed to improve the look and size of a woman's breasts, there are many important differences.

Breast Lift	Breast Augmentation
Lift sagging and loose breasts	Increase size
Raise the height of the nipple and areola	Restore volume loss and firmness
Reduce the amount of stretched or loose skin	Correct asymmetry between breasts

Consultation & Preparing for Surgery

Be prepared to discuss the following during your consultation:

- Your reasons for wanting to have surgery, your expectations, and your desired outcome
- Your medical conditions and previous medical treatments
- Your current medications and drug allergies; any vitamins or herbal supplements you take; and any alcohol, tobacco, vaping, or drug use
- Breast cancer in the family, as well as the results of any mammograms or previous biopsies
- Any questions or concerns you have about breast lift surgery from your own research

Your plastic surgeon will also:

- Evaluate your general health status and any preexisting health conditions or risk factors
- Examine and measure your breasts, including the nipple areolar positions, as well as assess breast shape and skin quality
- Discuss your options and recommend a course of treatment
- Discuss the possible outcomes of breast lift surgery, as well as any risks or potential complications
- Discuss the use of anesthesia during your breast lift surgery



Breast lift surgery may be performed in an accredited outpatient facility or in an ambulatory surgical center or a hospital. Prior to surgery, you may be asked to:

- Have a physical examination, including lab work
- Obtain breast imaging studies depending on your personal or family history or age
- Take certain medications or adjust your current medications
- Stop smoking or vaping*
- Avoid taking aspirin and certain anti-inflammatory drugs, as they can increase bleeding

**Smoking decreases blood flow, which can impede wound healing and increase the risk of infection.*

Be sure to ask your plastic surgeon questions. It's very important to understand all aspects of your breast lift surgery, especially regarding your personal health history. It's natural to feel some anxiety, whether it's excitement for your anticipated new look or a bit of preoperative stress. Don't be shy about discussing these feelings with your plastic surgeon.

The Procedure

Step 1 - Anesthesia

Medications are administered for your comfort during the surgical procedure. The choices include intravenous sedation and general anesthesia. Your doctor will recommend the best choice for you.

Step 2 - The incision

There are three common incision patterns:

- A. Around the areola
- B. Around the areola and vertically down from the areola to the breast crease
- C. Around the areola, vertically down from the breast crease and horizontally along the breast crease (inverted-T or anchor pattern)

Step 3 - Reshaping the breasts

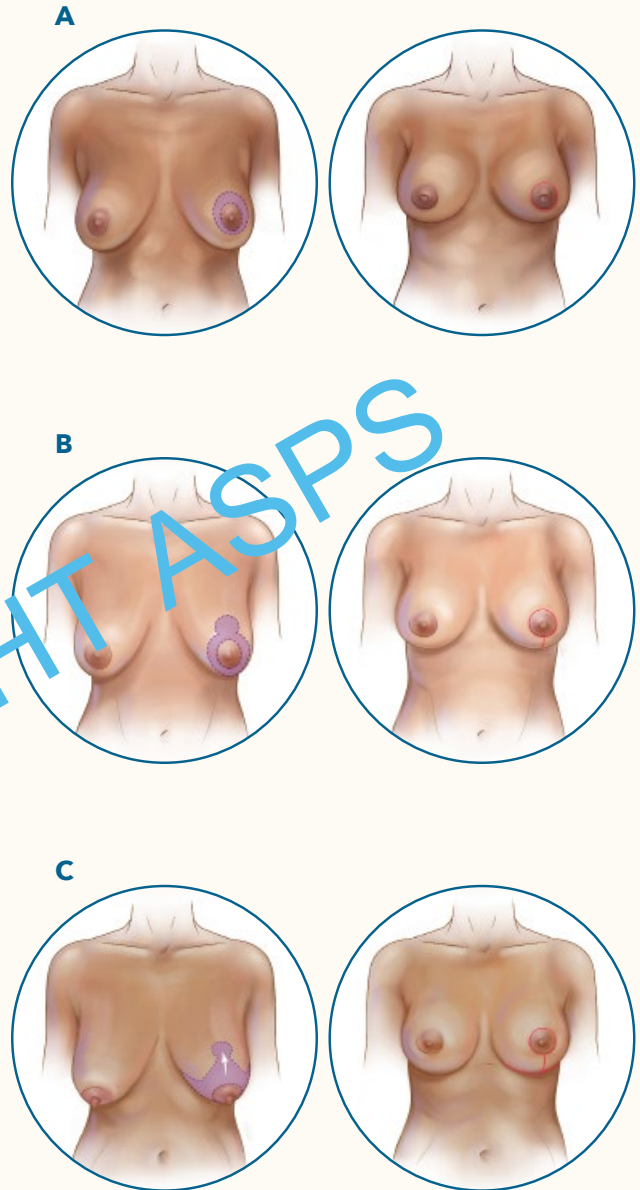
After your doctor makes the incisions:

- The underlying breast tissue is lifted and reshaped to improve the breast contour and firmness
- The nipple and areola are repositioned to a natural, more youthful height
- If necessary, enlarged areolas are reduced by excising skin at the edge
- Excess breast skin is removed to compensate for a loss of elasticity

Step 4 - Closing the incision

After your breasts are reshaped and excess skin is removed, the remaining skin is tightened as the incisions are closed. Some incision lines from breast lifts are hidden within the natural breast contours, while others are visible on the breast surface. Incision lines are permanent, but in most cases they will fade and significantly improve over time.

Sutures are layered deep within the breast tissue to create and support the newly shaped breasts. Sutures, skin adhesives, and/or surgical tape may be used to close the skin.



Risks & Safety

The choice to undergo breast lift surgery is a highly individual one, requiring consideration of whether the potential benefits align with your desired outcomes and if the associated risks and complications are acceptable. Your surgeon will discuss the specific risks related to your procedure with you.

Before the procedure, you may be asked to sign informed consent forms to confirm that you have a thorough understanding of the procedure and any potential risks and complications. It is important to ask any questions you may have to fully understand these risks.



Risks can include:

- Anesthesia risks
- Bleeding or hematoma formation
- Infection
- Poor healing of incisions
- Changes in nipple or breast sensation, which may be temporary or permanent
- Breast contour and shape irregularities
- Breast asymmetry (breasts are not exactly the same)
- Scarring within the breast tissue may cause firmness or lumps known as fat necrosis
- Fluid accumulation (seroma)
- Potential partial or total loss of nipple and areola (death of the nipple and/or areola)
- Deep vein thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, cardiac, and pulmonary complications
- Possibility of needing additional surgery

All risks will be fully discussed prior to your consent. It is important that you address all your questions directly with your plastic surgeon.

Other important considerations:

- Changes that occur in the breasts during pregnancy can minimize or reverse the improvement a breast lift provides
- Significant weight loss or weight gain after breast surgery can negatively impact breast appearance

Recovery & Results

Following your surgery, gauze or bandages will be applied to your incisions. An elastic bandage or support bra will minimize swelling and support the reconstructed breast. A small, thin tube may be temporarily placed under the skin to drain any excess blood or fluid. A pain pump may also be used to reduce the need for narcotics.

You will be given specific instructions that may include how to care for your surgical site(s) following surgery, medications to apply or take orally to aid healing and reduce the risk of infection, specific concerns to look for at the surgical site or in your general health, and when to follow up with your plastic surgeon.

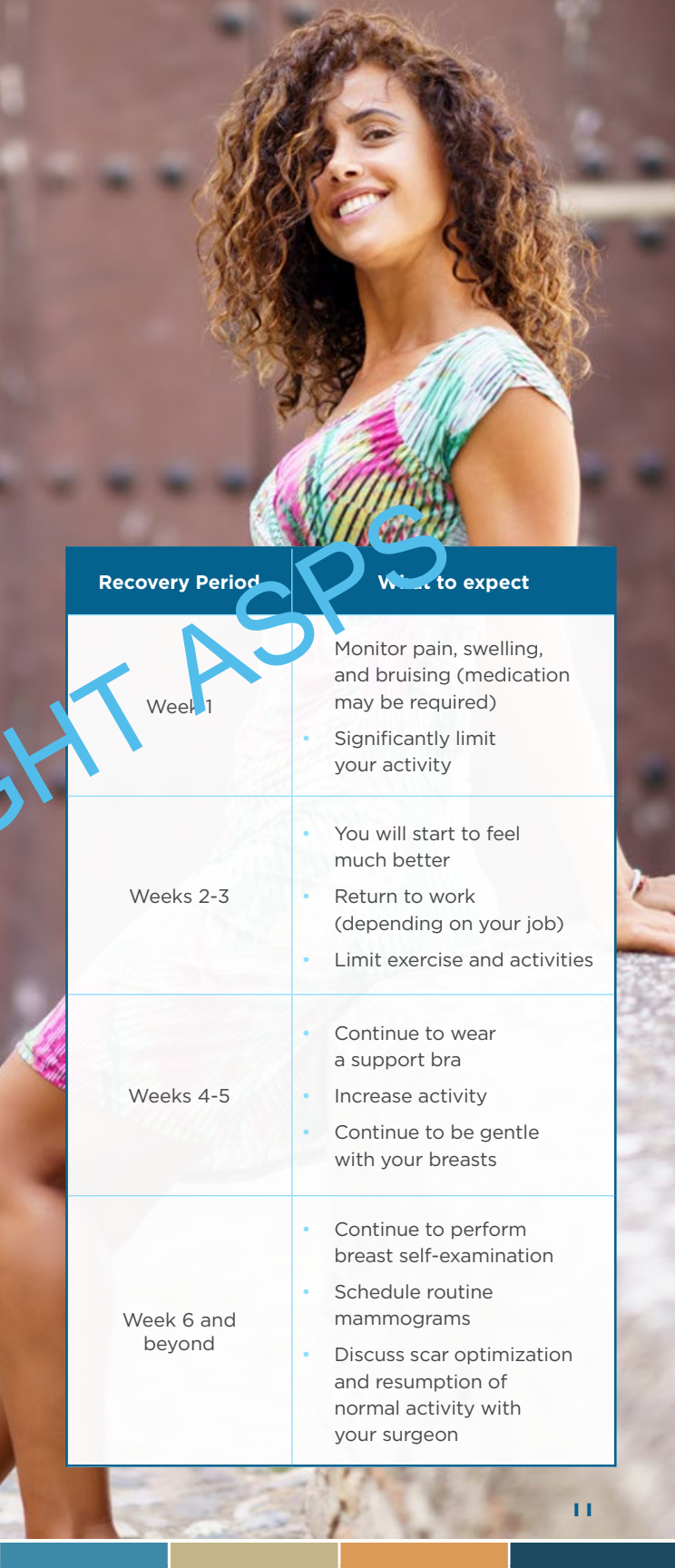
Be sure to ask your plastic surgeon specific questions about what you can expect during your individual recovery period.

- Where will I be taken after my surgery is complete?
- What medication will I be given or prescribed after surgery?
- Will I have dressings/bandages after surgery?
- When will they be removed?
- When can I resume normal activity and exercise?
- When do I return for follow-up care?

The immediate results of a breast lift surgery can include:

- Elevated and reshaped breasts
- Improved nipple and areola position
- Relief from sagging and drooping
- Enhanced self-confidence and improved body image

It's important to keep in mind that initial results can be obscured by swelling, bruising, and changes in skin sensitivity. The final results of the procedure may not be fully visible for several months.



Recovery Period	What to expect
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitor pain, swelling, and bruising (medication may be required)• Significantly limit your activity
Weeks 2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You will start to feel much better• Return to work (depending on your job)• Limit exercise and activities
Weeks 4-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to wear a support bra• Increase activity• Continue to be gentle with your breasts
Week 6 and beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to perform breast self-examination• Schedule routine mammograms• Discuss scar optimization and resumption of normal activity with your surgeon

Cost

Prices for breast lift surgery can vary. A surgeon's cost may be based on his or her experience, the type of procedure used, and geographic office location.

Cost may include:

- Anesthesia fees
- Hospital or surgical facility costs
- Medical tests
- Post-surgery garments
- Prescriptions for medication
- Surgeon's fee

Most health insurance plans do not cover breast lift surgery, as it is considered cosmetic surgery. Please ask your surgeon for a complete picture of the costs you can expect for your breast lift. Many plastic surgeons offer patient financing plans.

Your satisfaction involves more than a fee:

When choosing a plastic surgeon for breast lift surgery, remember that the surgeon's experience and your comfort with him or her are just as important as the final cost of the surgery.

Words to know

- **Areola:** Pigmented skin surrounding the nipple.
- **Breast augmentation:** Also known as augmentation mammoplasty, breast enlargement by surgery.
- **Breast lift:** Also known as mastopexy; surgery to lift the breasts.
- **Breast reduction:** Also known as reduction mammoplasty, reduction of breast size by surgery.
- **Excision:** To remove the skin.
- **General anesthesia:** Drugs and/or gases used during an operation to relieve pain and alter consciousness.
- **Hematoma:** Blood pooling beneath the skin.
- **Intravenous sedation:** Sedatives administered by injection into a vein to help you relax.
- **Local anesthesia:** A drug injected directly to the site of an incision during an operation to relieve pain.
- **Mammogram:** An x-ray image of the breast.
- **Mastopexy:** Surgery to lift the breasts.
- **Sutures:** Stitches used by surgeons to hold skin and tissue together.

Questions to ask my plastic surgeon

- ☐ Are you certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery?
- ☐ Are you a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons?
- ☐ Were you trained specifically in the field of plastic surgery?
- ☐ How many years of plastic surgery training have you had?
- ☐ Do you have hospital privileges to perform this procedure? If so, at which hospitals?
- ☐ Is the office-based surgical facility accredited by a nationally- or state-recognized accrediting agency, or is it state-licensed or Medicare-certified?
- ☐ Am I a good candidate for this procedure?
- ☐ What will be expected of me to get the best results?
- ☐ Where and how will you perform my procedure?
- ☐ What surgical technique is recommended for me?
- ☐ How long of a recovery period can I expect, and what kind of help will I need during my recovery?
- ☐ What are the risks and complications associated with my procedure?
- ☐ How are complications handled?
- ☐ What are my options if I am dissatisfied with the outcome?
- ☐ Do you have before-and-after photos I can look at for this procedure and what results are reasonable for me?

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Make the Right Choice

Plastic surgery involves many choices. The first and most important is selecting a member of the **American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS)**.

ASPS member surgeons meet rigorous standards:

- Board certification by the American Board of Plastic Surgery (ABPS)® or in Canada by The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada*
- Complete at least six years of surgical training following medical school with a minimum of three years of plastic surgery residency training
- Pass comprehensive oral and written exams
- Graduate from an accredited medical school
- Complete continuing medical education, including patient safety each year
- Perform surgery in accredited, state-licensed, or Medicare-certified surgical facilities

Do not be confused by other official-sounding boards and certifications.

The ABPS is recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), which has approved medical specialty boards since 1934. There is no ABMS-recognized certifying board with “cosmetic surgery” in its name. By choosing a member of The American Society of Plastic Surgeons, you can be assured that you are choosing a qualified, highly trained plastic surgeon who is board certified by the ABPS or The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.



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