

Patient information factsheet

Breast lipomodelling

We have written this factsheet to give you more information about a procedure called breast lipomodelling. It explains what breast lipomodelling is, what the procedure involves and what the potential risks are. We hope it will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of your healthcare team.

This factsheet is not intended to replace the discussion between you and your doctor.

What is breast lipomodelling?

Breast lipomodelling (also called 'autologous fat transfer' or 'fat grafting') is a surgical procedure in which fat is removed from one area of the body (the donor site), such as the tummy or thighs, and is then injected into the breast to:

- improve shape, contours or volume
- correct any deformities left after a previous surgery

What are the benefits of breast lipomodelling?

Breast lipomodelling can be used to improve the look and feel of a person's breasts in a number of different situations, including:

- before or after breast reconstruction surgery (for example, if you have had a mastectomy)
- after partial breast reconstruction (for example, if you have had a lumpectomy)
- after benign breast surgery
- to correct natural breast asymmetry

How should I prepare for the procedure?

We recommend that you purchase some supportive underwear (like high briefs or comfortable control underwear that covers your lower abdomen) to wear after the procedure to help reduce bruising and any discomfort around the donor site.

Please also bring an overnight bag with you to your appointment, just in case you need to stay in hospital overnight.

You will need to arrange for someone to bring you to and take you home from hospital.

What will happen during the procedure?

Breast lipomodelling will usually be performed as a day case procedure, so you will be able to go home the same day. However, if you are having other surgery at the same time, such as a breast reduction or an uplift on the opposite side, you may need to stay in hospital overnight.

This procedure is usually performed under a general anaesthetic (medicines used to send you to sleep, so you're unaware of surgery and do not move or feel pain while it's carried out).

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A surgeon will remove fat from one area of your body, usually from your tummy or your thighs. To remove the fat from the donor site, the surgeon will make very tiny incisions (cuts) in your skin. This part of the procedure is called liposuction.

The fat will then be processed to remove any blood or damaged cells. The surgeon will then inject the remaining fat into your breast through very tiny incisions in your skin.

What will happen after the procedure?

You will usually be able to go home the same day after the procedure. We will assess you before you go home to check that there are no immediate complications. We will also provide you with some written instructions on how to care for your wounds and a date for a review appointment.

Once you are at home, you should rest for 24 hours and then gradually increase your daily activity.

If you needed any stitches to close the incisions during the procedure, these will dissolve in a few weeks.

We recommend that you wear supportive underwear around the donor site for a minimum of six weeks to reduce any swelling or bruising. Supportive underwear will also help to reshape the donor site. If you choose to wear a bra while you recover, please ensure it is comfortable and does not put any pressure on your breasts.

About a third of the fat injected will be reabsorbed by your body over the first three months after surgery. After this time, the remaining fat will be stable as long as you do not lose or gain significant amounts of weight. If too much of the injected fat is reabsorbed, the procedure may need to be repeated. If this is the case, we will send you an appointment letter. All additional procedures will be at least three months apart.

Are there any risks or complications?

Lipomodelling is generally a very safe surgical procedure with low complication rates. However, as with any surgical procedure, there are some risks:

Bruising

The donor site will usually be bruised after the procedure, but this will settle in around two to three weeks.

Pain or numbness

You may experience some pain or numbness at the donor site. This is usually only temporary. However, for some people, this may be permanent.

Fat necrosis (lump)

Occasionally, the fat injected may form a lump. This is called fat necrosis. These lumpy areas will usually settle after a few months.

Bleeding

Bleeding can occur inside the tissues and form a lump called a haematoma. This is rare and will usually settle by itself without additional treatment.

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Infection

This is very rare.

Breast cancer recurring

Although it is very unlikely, it is not yet known whether lipomodelling increases a person's risk of breast cancer developing or recurring. If you have previously had breast cancer, we may recommend that you have a mammogram (an x-ray test) before the procedure.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the breast care nurses.

Telephone: **023 8120 3753**

Email: **breastcns@uhs.nhs.uk**

Useful links

www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/breast-cancer/fat-transfer-lipomodelling

www.nhs.uk/conditions/cosmetic-procedures/surgical-fat-transfer

www.keepingabreast.org.uk/lipomodelling

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