



Post-Pregnancy Surgery

PROCEDURE GUIDE



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PLASTIC SURGEON



Table of Contents

Introduction

The Consultation

The Procedures

- Breast Augmentation
 - Breast Lift (Mastopexy)
 - Abdominoplasty
-

Risks & Potential Complication

Gallery

Post-Pregnancy Q & A

Get in Touch



Introduction

Welcome to the Post-Pregnancy Surgery Guide, a comprehensive resource designed to help you understand the common procedures associated with surgery after pregnancy including breast augmentation, breast lift (mastopexy), breast reduction, and abdominoplasty.

Pregnancy brings about significant changes to a woman's body, many of which persist long after childbirth. The breasts may lose volume and loosen, while the abdominal muscles and skin can be stretched beyond their ability to naturally retract. This guide will provide you with the information you need to make informed decisions.



The Consultation

Before proceeding with any post-pregnancy surgery, you will be scheduled for a thorough consultation with Dr Sophie Ricketts. During this consultation, Dr Sophie will listen to your specific concerns and conduct a detailed examination of your breasts and/or abdomen to determine a tailored operative plan for you.

Dr Sophie will also engage in a comprehensive discussion about the potential risks and complications associated with the chosen procedure(s). You will also have a set of clinical photographs taken by Dr Sophie's practice nurse. There may be a requirement for an ultrasound of your abdominal wall if muscle separation is suspected, and/or a mammogram depending on your age and breast history.

You will then meet with one of Dr Sophie's assistants who will provide you with a surgery pack. This will contain further written information relating to your procedure as well as likely health fund or medicare rebates and a breakdown estimate of fees. You will be offered the opportunity to schedule a second consultation as required.

This personalised approach ensures that you are well informed, feel comfortable with the surgical plan and equipped with the information to make the decision to proceed.



The Procedures

BREAST AUGMENTATION

Breast augmentation is a cosmetic surgical procedure designed to increase the size, modify the shape, and overall appearance of the breasts.

THE CONSULTATION

During your pre-surgical consultation Dr Sophie will listen to your concerns and ideal goals which will allow her to guide you in making the best choices relating to your implant type, size and position. The choice of implant type, size and position is influenced by various factors, including the desired augmentation level, breast anatomy, skin characteristics, and body morphology.

THE PROCEDURE

This surgery involves the placement of implants under the breast to increase their size and projection usually via a small horizontal incision under the breast in the fold. The procedure is carried out in an accredited hospital under general anaesthesia usually as a day case, and takes around 1.5hrs.



What is the difference between silicone and saline implants?

Breast implants contain either silicone or saline. Silicone implants are favored for their realistic appearance and tactile feel, as well as their reduced tendency to ripple, owing to their cohesive gel filling, which provides a realistic consistency. Most breast implants used are now silicone.

What size implant?

The overall dimensions of your implant—how wide and tall it is—will be determined by your chest measurements. What volume or size in cubic centimetres (cc) depends to some degree on personal choice. There are a number of aids to help in this decision, one of which is 3D digital imaging with the Vectra 3D imaging system, which allows for the simulation of 3D pictures of the breasts with different-sized implants. Trial sizers can also be used to simulate the appearance of implants in a bra during your consultation.

Under or over the muscle?

When considering the placement of breast implants, there are two primary options: subglandular, also known as over-the-muscle placement, and submuscular, referred to as under-the-muscle placement.

Opting for subglandular placement typically results in a slightly faster recovery period as it avoids disruption to the chest muscle (the pectoralis muscle). However, it may increase the risk of visible rippling, particularly in individuals with thinner breast tissue.

On the other hand, submuscular placement can often yield a more natural appearance, particularly for those with less breast tissue thickness. Additionally, implants placed beneath the muscle may offer advantages during mammogram imaging, enhancing visibility. The decision between under or over-placement involves weighing the pros and cons, which will be thoroughly discussed during your consultation, taking into account factors such as your current breast shape, size, and desired aesthetic outcome.

What shape is the implant—round or teardrop?

Round implants: are known for their versatility, providing fullness in both the upper and lower parts of the breast. Their symmetrical nature ensures that the shape remains consistent, regardless of orientation.

Teardrop or anatomical implants: are designed to mimic the natural slope of the breast, offering a more gradual projection in the upper part of the breast.

The decision between round and teardrop implants is influenced by various factors, including personal preferences, desired aesthetics, and the amount of natural breast tissue that you have.

BREAST LIFT (MASTOPEXY)

A mastopexy, commonly known as a breast lift, aims to elevate the position of the breasts on the chest. This is performed by tightening and removing excess skin and repositioning the underlying breast tissue. While the procedure does not change the size of the breasts, it significantly impacts their shape and profile. For individuals desiring both lifted and larger breasts, a breast lift (mastopexy) can be combined with implants to increase the size and give an improved breast shape - with a rounder, fuller appearance.

THE CONSULTATION

During your consultation your specific goals will be assessed relating primarily to desired size. If a lift alone is planned, Dr Sophie will assess the degree of skin excess you have, how much breast volume you have to work with, and your nipple position and requirement for elevation. The necessary scar pattern will then be discussed (peri-areolar, lollipop, anchor shaped). If an increase in size is desired, you will be measured up for implants and the size and type of implant will be selected.

THE PROCEDURE

Breast lift surgery involves the removal of excess skin and an overall reshaping of the breasts. If breast implants are planned with your breast lift, these will usually be inserted in the same procedure. The procedure is performed under general anaesthesia. The length of your hospital stay following breast lift surgery depends on your overall health and the complexity of the procedure. For some, it can be completed as a day case, while others may necessitate a brief hospital stay.



BREAST REDUCTION

Breast reduction, also known as reduction mammoplasty, is a surgical procedure designed to reduce the size and reshape the breasts. This intervention is typically chosen by individuals with disproportionately large breasts, a condition known as macromastia, which can lead to physical discomfort, pain, and emotional distress.

THE PROCEDURE

During the breast reduction procedure, excess breast tissue and skin are removed to achieve a more proportionate breast size. By reducing the size and weight of the breasts, this procedure can alleviate symptoms such as back and neck pain, as well as improve posture. Dr Sophie tailors each surgery to the patient's unique needs, ensuring both functional and aesthetic goals are met.

In addition to removing excess tissue and modifying the breasts, this procedure involves repositioning the nipple and areola to a higher position on the chest wall. By lifting and firming the breasts, it aims to modify breast shape and symmetry while also reducing their size.

Dr Sophie may utilise different surgical techniques based on your breast size, shape, and desired outcome:

Inverted-T or Wise Pattern Technique (Anchor Pattern): This technique involves an incision around the perimeter of the areola, a vertical incision from the bottom of the areola to the inframammary fold, and a horizontal incision along the inframammary fold, resembling an anchor or inverted-T shape. It allows for significant tissue removal and reshaping, making it suitable for large breast reductions.



Vertical Pattern (Lollipop Technique): The vertical pattern technique includes an incision around the perimeter of the areola and a vertical incision from the bottom of the areola to the inframammary fold, creating a lollipop-shaped scar. It is suitable for moderate breast reductions.

Liposuction-only Technique: This technique involves the use of liposuction to remove excess fat from the breasts without significant skin removal. It is suitable for patients with good skin elasticity and minimal excess skin. However, it is typically only effective for mild to moderate breast reduction and may not address ptosis effectively.

Dr Sophie will carefully tailor the surgical approach to your individual needs and goals, ensuring the best possible outcome while minimising scarring and preserving nipple sensation.



ABDOMINOPLASTY

Abdominoplasty is a surgical procedure that has the ability to correct two primary concerns - excess skin and fat in the lower abdomen, as well as muscle separation and bulge that are often a consequence of pregnancy. The overall outcome is to tighten and flatten the front of the abdomen. There may be additional benefits to muscle repair such as improvement in low back pain by providing better core support.

THE PROCEDURE

The procedure is performed under general anaesthesia and takes around 3 hours. The incision is made low on the abdomen, and extends out towards the hips which helpfully conceals it under knickers or a bikini. This incision allows the removal of excess skin and access to repair separated muscles. There is usually a need to reposition the navel once the skin has been removed. Your hospital stay would typically be around 2 nights by which time you will be independent and safe at home.



FAQ

What is the downtime?

Following abdominoplasty, the initial recovery period involves a few days of discomfort when mobilising which is managed with prescribed pain medication. The first week after discharge from the hospital requires resting at home, avoiding strenuous activities, and the use of a compression garment provided to you. By the end of the second week, many patients experience a notable increase in mobility without discomfort, allowing a gradual return to light activities. Walking is the best form of exercise from about 3 weeks on. Strenuous exercise and heavy lifting are typically restricted for a 6 week period.

While significant improvements are visible within the first few weeks, complete resolution of swelling and optimal results may take a few months. Adherence to postoperative care instructions and attending follow-up appointments is essential for a smooth recovery, and individual experiences may vary. Regular follow-up appointments with Dr Sophie and her practice nurses play a crucial role in monitoring progress and addressing any concerns throughout the healing process.

Medicare Availability

Abdominoplasty may be available under Medicare item number 30175 for eligible patients who have experienced severe muscle separation following pregnancy as measured by abdominal ultrasound. Depending on your level of health fund cover, rebates on hospital, surgical and anaesthetic fees may also apply.

Risks & Potential Complications of Post-Pregnancy Surgery

While post-pregnancy surgeries such as breast lift (mastopexy), breast reduction, and abdominoplasty can offer significant benefits, it is important to be aware of the potential risks and complications. Understanding these can help you make an informed decision and prepare adequately for the procedure and recovery.

Risks and possible complications include:

General Surgical Risks

- Infection
- Bleeding
- Adverse Reaction to Anaesthesia

Specific Risks for Breast Lift (Mastopexy) and Breast Reduction

- Scarring
- Changes in Nipple or Breast Sensation
- Asymmetry
- Breastfeeding Difficulties

Specific Risks for Abdominoplasty

- Seroma
- Haematoma
- Poor Wound Healing
- Changes in Skin Sensation

A soft-focus background of pink flower petals, likely peonies, in shades of light pink and magenta. The petals are layered and create a delicate, textured pattern. A white rectangular box is centered on the page, containing the main text.

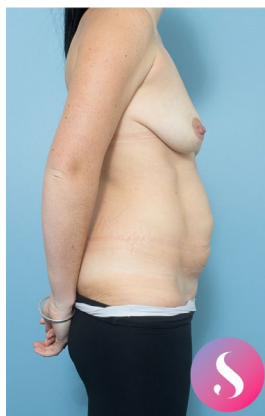
Risks & Potential Complications of Post-Pregnancy Surgery

Long-term Risks and Considerations

- Recurrence of Skin Laxity
- Capsular Contracture (Breast Augmentation)
- Blood Clots

Dr Sophie will provide detailed information and personalised advice during your consultation, ensuring you understand the full scope of potential risks and how to mitigate them. Your safety and satisfaction are the highest priorities, and thorough preoperative planning and postoperative care are essential components of your surgical journey.

Gallery



Gallery



WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT DURING THE CONSULTATION WITH DR SOPHIE RICKETTS?

During your consultation, Dr Sophie will address your specific concerns, conduct a detailed examination, and discuss the most suitable surgical options. She will also explain the potential risks and complications associated with each procedure to ensure you are fully informed. You will be provided with a surgery pack by Dr Sophie's assistant containing further information regarding the procedure(s) discussed.

HOW LONG IS THE RECOVERY PERIOD FOR POST-PREGNANCY SURGERY?

The recovery period varies for each individual and the specific procedures performed. Generally, initial recovery takes about 2–3 weeks, with most patients returning to light activities and desk work. Full recovery, including resuming physical work and more intensive exercise, may take up to 6 weeks. Dr Sophie will provide tailored recovery expectations depending on the complexity of your surgery.

HOW CAN I PREPARE FOR POST-PREGNANCY SURGERY TO ENSURE THE BEST OUTCOME?

Preparation includes a thorough consultation, following Dr Sophie's preoperative instructions, quitting smoking, maintaining a healthy diet, and arranging for support during your recovery. Mental readiness and understanding of the recovery process are also crucial for a successful outcome.

WHAT MEASURES CAN I TAKE TO MAINTAIN THE RESULTS OF MY SURGERY?

To maintain your surgical results, adopt a balanced diet, engage in regular exercise, avoid significant weight fluctuations, and protect your skin from sun damage. Dr Sophie will also provide long-term health tips and follow-up care to help you sustain your results.



Get in touch with Dr Sophie Ricketts today!

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