

ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL HEALTHSOURCE

Breast Reduction May Relieve Physical Pain

Women with extremely large breasts often face a life filled with pain, embarrassment, and the inability to find properly fitting clothes. However, it is the back, neck, and shoulder pain and, in some cases, breathing problems and headaches, which usually bring these women to a plastic surgeon for reduction mammoplasty or breast reduction surgery.

In breast reduction surgery, a plastic surgeon removes excess glandular tissue, fat, and skin and moves the nipple and areola to fit the contours of the newly shaped breast. The surgery, done under general anesthesia, involves an overnight stay in the hospital and usually takes from two to four hours. Intravenous pain medication is available immediately after surgery, and for the first few days after surgery, oral pain medication. The breast area is wrapped in an elastic bandage or a surgical bra over gauze dressings.

After the dressings are removed, a surgical bra must be worn continuously for the next several weeks. Normal activities can usually resume after two weeks and strenuous activities within approximately six weeks. Scarring occurs with this type of surgery, although the scars fade with time and vary from patient to patient. With the newest techniques, many women are able to breast-feed after surgery.

Possible complications from breast reduction surgery include infection, abnormal bleeding, wound healing difficulties and decreased sensations.

Breast reduction surgery usually results in a very satisfied patient who feels better, has a new self-image, and a positive outlook on life.



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