



Under the knife

Plastic and reconstructive surgeon Dr Vij Vijayasekaran, from the Western Australian Plastic Surgery Centre, highlights one of the latest surgery options.

“SHORT SCAR” BREAST REDUCTION

Breast reduction is a procedure that reduces the volume of the breast, repositions the nipple and produces a more aesthetically pleasing breast shape, without significantly affecting the function of the breast.

Women who present for breast reduction surgery commonly complain of symptoms such as neck, back and shoulder pain and skin irritation. Large breasts may also restrict a woman's ability to exercise and can affect her self-esteem.

Mastopexy or breast lift procedures are aimed at constructing a beautifully shaped, appropriately sized breast. Women who have developed a “droopy” breast shape as a result of age, pregnancy or weight loss are candidates for a breast lift procedure. Mastopexy uses techniques similar to those utilised in breast reduction to raise the position of the nipple and reshape the breast. Similarly, the procedure may be done in combination with a breast augmentation.

Until recently, most breast reduction procedures were done using an inferior pedicle (tongue of tissue that provides blood supply to the nipple) and a T-shaped closure pattern, leaving women with a long, anchor-shaped scar.

But recent advances in reduction and lift techniques have resulted in many plastic surgeons adopting a superior pedicle, vertical short scar reduction pattern, producing a significantly shorter scar, with a more aesthetically pleasing breast shape that is maintained over a longer term.

The “short scar” reduction technique is most suited for women undergoing a breast lift or small-to-moderate reduction. Your surgeon will be able to determine if you are a suitable candidate for a “short scar” procedure.

Q: Does a breast reduction/lift increase my breast cancer risk?

A: There is no evidence showing an increase in the risk of breast cancer following breast reduction surgery. Most plastic surgeons will organise a post-operative baseline mammogram to document the surgical changes following breast reduction surgery.

Q: Does having a breast reduction affect my ability to breastfeed?

A: Yes, having a breast reduction may affect your ability to breastfeed. However, approximately 50-75 percent of women will be able to breastfeed following a reduction procedure.

Q: How soon after having a baby can I have a breast reduction or lift procedure?

A: Most plastic surgeons would recommend that you wait at least one year following pregnancy and the cessation of lactation before having a breast reduction or lift procedure.

Q: Will a breast reduction or lift procedure affect my nipple sensation?

A: The majority women report improved or no change in nipple sensation one year after breast reduction. In the immediate post-operative period you may notice altered nipple sensation.

Q: How long is the procedure and how long do I need to stay in hospital?

A: Most breast reduction/mastopexy procedures take approximately two-to-three hours, require a general anaesthetic and overnight admission to hospital.