

BREAST LIFT AFTERCARE

The advice below is general and will apply to the average patient. It should be a guide. All patients are different, and some will recover quicker than others.

Before you leave the hospital

Medications – You will be provided with painkillers before discharge. These will usually include strong painkillers such as dihydrocodeine.

Follow-up appointments for dressing clinics – You will be handed a card with details of your first follow-up appointment and contact details for the ward if you have any concerns once you get home.

Have someone to take you home and a **responsible adult with you for the first night**.

Information on post-surgical bras

A well-fitting bra made of soft fabric can provide support and comfort during the first few months following breast lift surgery.

The bras are for support and comfort during the first few weeks.

Surgical bras can help maintain the shape of your breasts during the healing process over the first 6 months.

If you do not have a bra in the hospital, you can buy one after discharge. Usually, your nurse will help you put the bra on before you are



discharged home. There is no immediate rush, as your dressings will provide some support meanwhile.

The bra may stay on as long as it feels comfortable and supportive. It need not be worn religiously 24/7 and should be worn for at least 3 months after surgery (preferably 6 months).

Your surgical bra should fulfil these criteria:

- **No underwiring**
- **Seam-free or the seam should be outward-facing**
- **Should have adjustable frontal closure. Please avoid bras that need to be pulled over the head**
- **Should have adjustable straps.**
- **Should not pressure or dig into the breast crease**

Good quality surgical bras are available in most department stores (M&S, Tesco, Asda).

Recommended specialist post-surgical bras can be purchased online by following the links below:

[Macom signature compression bra](#)

[Lipoelastic PI Ideal](#)

[Lipoelastic PI relax](#)

Use discount code QUABA (we are not affiliated with either brand)

The only measurement required is the high street band size (under bust measurement – e.g., 28,30,32,34,36 etc.). **The cup sizes of these bras are expandable, and the bra moulds to your new cup size.**

When you get home

Week 1

Get plenty of rest.

Sleep in whichever position is comfortable, and keep your support bra on at night.

You can shower but try not to soak your dressings too much. Do not worry if the outer dressings come off. You will still have paper tape (steri-strips) over the wounds, and you can get these wet. They will generally stay stuck on your incisions.

Discomfort and Pain are typical in the first few days after surgery, but often this is not as bad as expected. You may experience some numbness around your nipples and incision areas. You may experience temporary soreness, tightness, swelling and bruising, and discomfort in the incision area. Your breasts may be sensitive to stimulation for a few weeks.

It is not unusual for one side to feel different or more painful than the other. If your breasts are roughly the same size, then there is no reason to be concerned.

Take your pain medication as prescribed.

A little **blood staining** on the inside of your dressings is not unusual during the first week.

Your **mood** may fluctuate after surgery – this is normal!

Your breasts may feel **tight and swollen** for several days, and **bruising** is not uncommon. This will settle gradually over the first 1-2 weeks.

Walk as soon as possible; this helps to reduce swelling and lowers the chance of blood clots.

Follow a balanced diet. Increase fluid intake. Decreased activity may promote constipation, so you may wish to add more raw fruit and fibre to your diet.

Avoid smoking for at least two weeks, as smoking delays healing and increases the risk of complications.

Avoid alcohol when taking pain medications. Even if you are not taking pain medications, it is advisable to avoid alcohol for three weeks as it can cause fluid retention, which may worsen swelling.

You can consider **driving** if you must towards the end of the first week if you are not taking strong painkillers and are confident performing an emergency break.

Nurse appointment at the end of week 1

You will have a nurse appointment to **remove the outer dressings** at the end of week 1. The nurses will check you are OK and have no problems. They can answer any questions.

The **paper tape (steri-strips)** covering the incisions **will generally be left on, and you can continue to shower with these on.**



The appearance of breasts and paper stitches (steri-strips) at the end of the first week once the outer dressings have been removed. Keep the steri-strips on for another week.

Returning to work

Return to work may be an option at the start of week two if your job is office-based/non-physical. If your job is more physical, you may need to wait until the end of week 2 before returning to work.

Week 2

Most patients will feel they no longer require any medication, but you can continue taking painkillers if needed.

Any tightness should be easing off, but there will still be some swelling, which can take another few weeks to settle.

You may still have a little bruising.

You should be fine **going about your day-to-day business**.

Please remember to remove your paper tape (steri-strips) by the end of week 2. If the tape is stuck, you can coat it with Vaseline and wait for half an hour before removing it.

Weeks 3 and 4

If your wounds are dry, you can moisturise your incisions with a plain moisturising cream (Aveeno, E45) or bio-oil.

You will feel more yourself, and most of the swelling (80-90%) will have settled.

You may feel **shooting-type pains** as nerves knit back together.

You may develop some **delayed healing** (especially at the T junctions) – which may require different dressings (see scar/ wound care link below). This is not uncommon.

When can I fly after surgery?

Check with your airline and insurance company before flying. It'll depend on your airline's regulations and the flight duration. If in doubt, please ask your surgeon.

Risk of DVT

If you're flying after recent surgery, especially when your mobility has been restricted, you're at an increased risk of [deep vein thrombosis \(DVT\)](#), a blood clot in one of the deep veins in your body, usually in your legs.

Guidance

For medium-haul (3-6 hours) and long-haul (6-12 hours) and as a guide, allow **2-3 weeks** after a breast lift. You could fly around 1-2 weeks after surgery for short haul (less than 3 hours) flights. You can take steps to reduce your risk of DVT, such as drinking plenty of water, using your Ted stockings, and moving around on the plane. The risk of developing a travel-related DVT is low, even if you're classed as moderate to high risk.

Travel Insurance

Check your travel insurance policy carefully, as you may need to inform the insurance company you have recently had surgery.

Weeks 5 and 6

After 1 month (beginning of week 5), you can cover your scars with micropore tape (Micropore 3M), which can be purchased from most pharmacies. **You can shower with the tape on.**

Some patients may still have areas of **delayed healing** which require dressings.

Scar care

Apply the micropore tape for 3-5 days, then remove it and **moisturise** the wounds with a plain moisturiser. **Leave exposed for 1-2 days**, reapply the tape for another 3-5 days, and keep repeating the moisturise/ tape cycle for at least 4 months.

Tape - 3-5 days

Moisturise - 1-2 days

Tape 3-5 days

Moisturise 1-2 days

Keep repeating for 4 months.

Exercise

You can resume gentle exercise after 4 weeks and build up to more strenuous exercise by the end of week 6.

Only do this if your wounds are healed, and wear your support bra.

From 6 weeks to 6 months

The last 10% or so of the swelling will settle over this period, and your breasts will feel more natural. It will take the full 6 months for your breasts to take their final shape, and you can expect them to drop a little.

Scars should fade but can still be red at 6 months. Please **continue alternating between moisturising and taping your scars.**

Shooting pains and other pains may persist as nerves heal or after exercise. This is normal.

When to call/ get in touch

- If you have increased swelling or bruising which is not settling.
- If you notice swelling in one/ both of your legs or feel short of breath – this may indicate a clot in one of your veins/ lungs – Deep vein thrombosis/ Pulmonary embolism.
- If one breast is much more swollen than the other.
- If you have increased redness along the incision (this may be a sign of infection).
- If you have severe or increased pain not relieved by medication.
- If you have any side effects to medications, such as rash, nausea, headache, or vomiting.

- If you have a temperature over 38 degrees Celsius.
- If you have any **persistent** yellowish or greenish discharge from the incisions.

If concerned, please contact the hospital where your procedure was performed.

Further advice

If you are uncertain about anything or require further advice, please contact us at hello@waterfronthospital.co.uk