

Is breast reduction a major operation?

The procedure is done with the patient under general anesthesia. The hospital stay is about two to three days. The procedure can also be performed in the outpatient surgery center as well.

The operation usually takes about three hours depending on the size of the breasts and the procedure performed.

Are there different methods to perform the surgery?

There are several accepted procedures used to perform a breast reduction. The choice of one procedure or another depends on the experience of the surgeon, the size of the breasts and the expectations of the patient. The choice of a certain procedure is discussed with the patient at the time of consultation and the pros and cons of that method are explained.

Where are the scars?

In most methods the nipple is transferred either as a free graft or attached to breast tissue under it. Therefore there will be a scar around the nipple. There is also a scar in the fold under the breast and also a smaller one connecting the above two scars.

When are sutures removed?

Sutures are removed between seven to ten days after the surgery. Steri-strips are usually applied over the scar to decrease the tension on the wound edges.

What about the post-operative care?

Dressings are changed after 48 hours and the patient is allowed to wear a special bra and start showering. The patient is then followed at the office as deemed necessary until the sutures are removed and then on a weekly basis until healing is adequate.

Is it a painful procedure?

Since the surgery is performed under general anesthesia the patient feels nothing during the procedure. In the postoperative period analgesics and sedatives are given to alleviate the pain and discomfort.

What are the physical limitations after surgery?

The patient is advised to restrict arm movements until the sutures are removed. Then the patient is allowed gradually increasing physical activity until six weeks after the surgery when normal activity is resumed.

How is the nipple sensation effected?

Depending on the procedure chosen there could be minimal to major loss of nipple sensation. Usually the sensation grows back progressively depending on the healing power of the patient.

What about pregnancy and breast feeding?

In most cases the ability of the breast to form milk is reduced and if the ducts are interrupted during surgery, the ability of the patient to breast feed is reduced markedly. In all cases breast feeding is not advised.

Can the size and shape of the breasts change after surgery?

After the swelling is gone and the breasts settle to a stable size and shape, aging, weight changes, pregnancy and some medical illnesses can affect the size and shape of the breasts. Revision of the breast shape can then be done.

What are the complications?

Just like any other surgery, hematoma and infection are the common complications although quite rare. Skin necrosis and hypertrophy of the scars are also a possibility, along with loss of nipple sensation.