

Lipomodelling in breast surgery

Breast Care Centre

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Information for Patients

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What is lipomodelling?

Lipomodelling or fat grafting (sometimes called lipofilling or fat transfer) is a procedure used to improve the contour of the reconstructed breast or augment (increase the size of) the breasts. It involves taking fat from elsewhere in the body and injecting it into the required area. The result can give a soft, natural appearance and feel, and is minimally invasive.

How is it done?

Fat is taken from your own body, often the abdomen, thighs, buttocks or hips, in a procedure called liposuction (a term applied to cosmetic fat reduction). It is done through small incisions (cuts) into the skin. The removed fat is then concentrated and grafted with great care in tiny amounts into the area to be treated. This procedure is performed under a local or general anaesthetic in one or more sessions, depending on the amount of fat graft needed.

Are there any side effects or complications?

Most patients do not have any problems. In order to reduce the risk of problems you should be as fit as possible before the surgery, not actively dieting and not smoking.

As with all surgical procedures, there are possible complications, and these include:

- **Swelling at the donor site** - as with any liposuction, swelling may occur at the site where the fat was taken from. This can take a while to settle and this is why we advise you to wear a compression garment after surgery. Bruising and skin discolouration can occur but this is usually temporary.

Before the surgery you should not be taking aspirin or anti-inflammatory medication, in order to reduce the risk of this happening. If you are taking anticoagulants (such as warfarin) your surgeon will advise you when to stop taking these before your surgery.

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- **Sensation-** the treated areas can remain numb for several weeks
- **Some of the fat grafted may disappear over time and the procedure may need to be repeated.** Contour irregularities may occur but these should settle in time. Less frequently dead fat cells can cause scarring (known as fat necrosis) resulting in hard nodules. Occasionally biopsies are required to confirm the diagnosis of this benign lump.
- **Pain** – if you experience discomfort following the procedure, you may take your usual painkillers as required (do not exceed the recommended dose).

It is extremely rare however parts of the underlying tissues or structures can be affected for example the lungs, the bowel or the breast implant. If you do feel very unwell within a few days after the procedure and simple painkillers are not working, please inform the ward or your consultant.

Post operative recovery

The surgery is done in theatre, usually as a day case, but sometimes an overnight stay in hospital is needed. You should rest for 24 hours and then increase your normal activity. Normal, non-strenuous activity can be resumed after 2 to 3 days. You will have a few small stitches to close the cuts. These may be dissolvable, but if not they will need removing in the dressing clinic after 7 to 10 days. It is advisable to wear a snug girdle, long-legged knickers or cycle shorts over the donor area for a few weeks. Ensure your bra does not put pressure on the lipomodelled area.

Mammograms

Following this procedure future mammograms on the treated breast can look different and sometimes require further investigation.

Who can I contact for further information?

The breast care nurses (Clinical Nurse specialists/key workers) are available from Monday to Friday 9:00 am-4:00 pm.

Our office telephone number is **0116 250 2513** – an answerphone service is available on this number, messages will only be listened to during our working hours.

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