

Surgical procedure

Breast Reduction

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

This surgical fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional. If your injury or illness is critical or life threatening, call triple zero (000). To speak to a registered nurse, call healthdirect on 1800 022 222.

Notes and questions to bring to your doctor

For more help with what to ask your doctor, visit healthdirect.gov.au/question-builder

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This document will give you information about a breast reduction. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

What is a breast reduction?

A breast reduction is an operation to make your breasts smaller and, sometimes, to improve their shape.

What are the benefits of surgery?

Your breasts should be smaller and have a better shape.

Are there any alternatives to surgery?

If you are overweight, you may be able to reduce the size of your breasts by losing weight. You may find it easier to cope with large breasts by wearing a custom-made bra or corset.

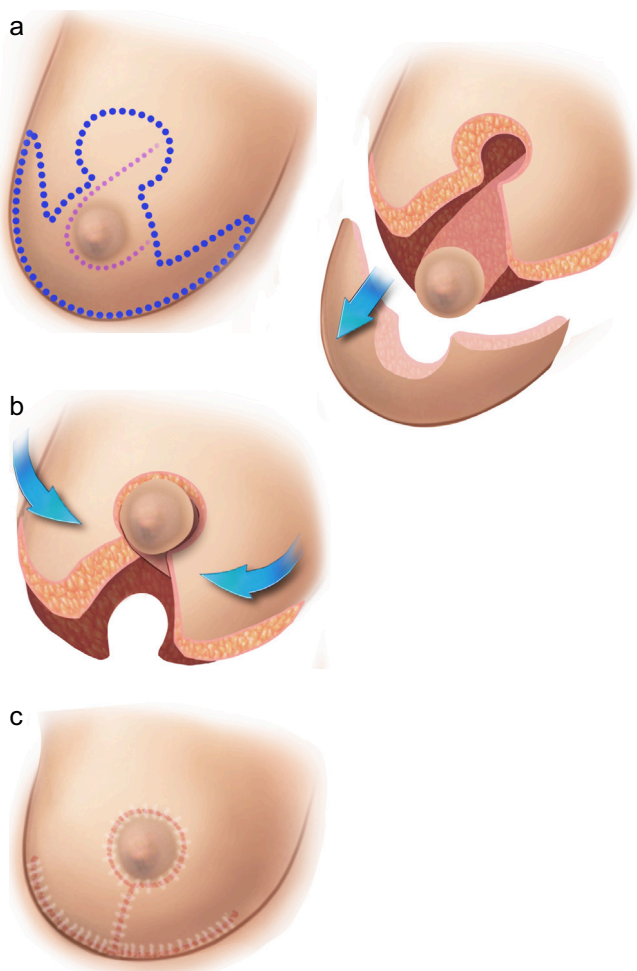


Figure 1

- a The excess fat and skin are removed
- b The breast is re-shaped and nipple is lifted
- c An anchor-shaped scar

What does the operation involve?

The operation is performed under a general anaesthetic and usually takes about 90 minutes. Your surgeon will make a cut on the line of the areola (the darker area around your nipple) and a vertical cut underneath your areola. They will remove some of your breast tissue, excess fat and skin. Your surgeon will reshape your breast and lift your nipple so it is in a higher position (see figure 1).

What complications can happen?

1 General complications

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Unsightly scarring
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Blood clots

2 Specific complications

- Developing a collection of blood or fluid inside a breast
- Developing a hard lump in a breast
- Numbness or continued pain on the outer part of your breast
- Loss of skin, including the areola and nipple
- Stiff shoulder
- Change of breast and nipple sensation
- Reduced ability to breastfeed
- Cosmetic problems

How soon will I recover?

Your breasts may look discoloured and will feel firm and swollen.

You should be able to go home the next day. You should be able to return to normal activities after two to three weeks.

You should be able to return to work after a week, depending on your type of work. You should be able to do a limited amount of activity, such as lifting young children, after about two weeks. Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

The results of a breast reduction improve gradually over time. Your breasts should become softer and more natural.

Summary

A breast reduction is an operation to make your breasts smaller. It is suitable only for certain women. You should consider the options carefully and have realistic expectations about the results.

Acknowledgements

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