

BREAST RECONSTRUCTION:

Breast Free Flap Revision +/- Fat Grafting +/- Liposuction

What to Expect

OPERATION DURATION

This surgery is performed under General Anaesthetic and takes approximately 2-4 hours.

HOSPITAL STAY

You will be in hospital for 1 night, depending on your personal recovery. Everyone is different, and your recovery will be tailored to you.

Dr Taylor will not be in to visit you every day whilst you are in the hospital - he will phone your nurses for daily updates and provide over-the-phone instructions. He will come in to see you if you have any issues.

Our specialist nurse will follow up with you on the phone once you have been discharged. You will also be given her direct contact number. Feel free to phone or message her 9am - 5pm 7 days a week, if you have any questions or concerns.

What Complications May Occur With This Procedure?

GENERAL POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS OF ANY PROCEDURE

- Bleeding
- Infection at the surgical site
- Allergic reaction to equipment, materials or medication
- Blood clot in your leg or lungs
- Chest infection
- Acute kidney injury

SPECIFIC POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS OF THIS PROCEDURE

- Wound healing problems - wound has delayed healing and may open up (dehiscence)
- Lump developing under your wound caused by blood collecting (haematoma)
- Lump developing under your wound caused by fluid collecting (seroma)
- Developing a hard lump in the breast (fat necrosis)
- Asymmetry
- Contour irregularities at the donor (usually legs and/or thighs) and recipient site (breast/s)

CONSEQUENCES OF THIS PROCEDURE

- Discomfort, bruising and swelling (temporary)
- Further scars (done to improve shape and symmetry)

How to Prepare for Your Procedure

HOW LONG SHOULD YOU BOOK OFF WORK

This depends on your profession - If you work in an office/ non-strenuous job 1-2 weeks; if you have a physically demanding job 6 weeks, depending on the type of work. Your specific requirements will be discussed with you on an individual basis.

If you require a medical certificate, please email admin@drduncantaylor.com.au.

FASTING

You are required to fast for General Anaesthesia. You cannot have any food or fluids (including lollies and chewing gum) 6 hours prior to your surgery.

You can have some sips of water only up to 2 hours prior to your surgery and nothing after this time.

If you take regular medication, please check with our nurse to see if you should be taking your medication in the lead-up to/on the day of your surgery. Some medications should be withheld.

PRE-OP WASH

Please purchase a pre-op chlorhexidine wash from the pharmacy. Use this whilst showering, the day before and the morning of your surgery.

SURGICAL GARMENT

You will need to purchase surgical compression garments prior to your surgery:
Breast Care WA After Surgery Garment & Fitting Specialists www.breastcarewa.com.au

Please bring these with you on the day of surgery - bring them into the theatre.
Wear your garments 24/7 for 4-6 weeks (including in the hospital). You can remove the garment to shower.

Fat grafting into the breasts

You will require a surgical compression bra.

Fat harvesting from the abdomen

You will require an abdominal binder or crotchless high-waisted compression shorts.

Fat harvesting from the thighs

You will require crotchless knee-length compression shorts.

Fat harvesting from the thighs and abdomen

You will require high-waisted crotchless knee-length compression shorts.

Perioperative Instructions

THE MORNING OF SURGERY

You will be asked to arrive at the hospital approximately 2 hours before your surgery start time - Our Practice Manager will email you your admission information (time/ where to go) 1-2 weeks before your surgery date.

Dr Taylor will see you in the pre-operative area before you go into theatre. He will mark out your breasts for your surgery. This process must be completed whilst you are awake, as he requires you to be standing.

DRAINS

You will not routinely have any drains.

Post-Operative Instructions

ACTIVITY

You can get up and moving the same day after your surgery, once you have recovered from your general anaesthetic. Please do not do any physical activity or heavy lifting over 10 kgs for 4-6 weeks. No rigorous activities including tennis, horse riding, golf or aerobics for 8 weeks. After this time you can ease back into your usual activities.

You can drive after approximately 1 week or when you feel able.

PAIN RELIEF

You should not be in significant pain after your surgery. Your anaesthetist will prescribe regular pain relief to take on the ward post-surgery. If you have pain on top of this, you should ask for additional pain medication, which will be prescribed on your drug chart should you need it.

Areas you have had fat harvested from (liposuction and/or fat grafting) will be quite swollen and bruised post-surgery – this is normal for this procedure.

You will not be discharged from the hospital until your pain is well managed on oral medications. Please take paracetamol regularly. If you have severe pain that is not responding to the pain relief, please phone our nurse during office hours.

Please do not put ice packs on your wounds.

Do not take aspirin.

ANTIBIOTICS

You may be given a 5 day course of oral antibiotics. Depending on how long you remain in the hospital, you may be discharged home with some remaining antibiotics. Please take the full course.

ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES

You will be prescribed some anti-inflammatories whilst you are in the hospital, and you will also be discharged with some. Please take the entire course, even if you are not in pain. Please take this medication as prescribed on the box by your anaesthetist.

BLEEDING

If the wound starts to bleed, please apply firm pressure for 15 minutes. If a dressing is in place, please do this over the top of the dressing (do not remove the dressing).

This should control the bleeding. However, if it is not easily controlled or does not subside, please phone our nurse specialist during working hours.

After hours, please attend your after-hours GP or an Emergency Department.

INFECTION

If your wound becomes hot, swollen, oozes pus, or you are spiking temperatures, the wound may be infected. Please phone our nurse immediately.

REMOVAL OF SUTURES

Sutures routinely used during these procedures do not require removal and will dissolve on their own.

WOUND & DRESSING CARE

Open revision sites

Your wounds will be covered with surgical tape and glue. This is waterproof. You can shower as usual and pat dry.

After approximately 3 weeks, gently peel the dressing off in the shower. If you do have a standard dressing on, please sponge bath around these to avoid getting the dressing wet, leaving it intact until you are seen in the nurse dressing clinic 5 -10 days post-op.

Liposuction/Fat Grafting sites

Your wounds will be covered with Steri-Strips and simple dressings - sponge bath to avoid getting these dressings wet. After 2 days, remove the simple outer dressing, leaving the Steri-Strips intact. You can then shower, pat the Steri-Strips dry and leave to air dry completely before getting dressed.

Do not immerse the wound in water, i.e. swimming or bathing for 4-6 weeks or until the wound is completely healed.

Bruising takes around 2-3 weeks to resolve, and swelling can take up to 3-6 months to resolve completely.

MASSAGING FOR SCAR REDUCTION

Commence massaging your scars once your dressings are removed and wounds have healed – approximately 3-4 weeks post-op.

It is recommended that you massage your scars with emollient or bio oil for 5 minutes, 2-3 times per day.

Wipe off the residue and then apply a silicone gel to sit directly on the wound (this sits on the scar and dries, creating a film). Continue this for 3-6 months.

SLEEP

Do not sleep on your stomach for 6 weeks.

Other Useful Tips

The power outlet in your hospital room is often quite far away from your bed - we suggest bringing a long charging cable for your phone so that you can keep it within reach.

You will be in a hospital gown during your hospital stay, as it is challenging to change into pyjamas whilst you have drains, etc.

Some women feel more comfortable taking in their own post-surgery recovery gown, with inbuilt drain pockets and a Velcro/zip/tie front - this can also be useful to wear to your postoperative clinic appointments or any Silver Chain visits for easy access to your wounds.

Your Follow Up

The following follow up appointments will be scheduled for you:

- 5 - 10 days post surgery Nurse check-up for wound checks and dressing changes.
- 6 weeks post surgery review consultation with Dr Taylor.

If required, you may be referred to Silver Chain for assistance with changing your dressings (if requiring dressing changes for a more extended period, this will depend on your wound healing.)

If you have any questions please contact us:

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For more information visit drduncantaylor.com.au