

## BREAST RECONSTRUCTION:

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

## What to Expect

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### OPERATION DURATION

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

### HOSPITAL STAY

A day stay or a 1 night stay, depending on the extent of the procedure. 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.

## What Complications May Occur With This Procedure?

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### 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

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### 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](mailto: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 2x surgical compression garments prior to your surgery or reuse from your initial reconstruction procedure, if you still have them.

Please bring these with you on the day of surgery, bring one of these into theatre with you and leave the other in your hospital bag in your room.

Wear your garments 24/7 for 4-6 weeks (including in the hospital). You can remove the garment to shower.

### **Fat grafting into the breast/s**

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

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### 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

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### 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 heat or 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 have spiking temperatures, the wound may be infected. Please phone our nurse immediately. If out of office hours, contact your after-hours GP or go to the emergency department.

## REMOVAL OF SUTURES

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

In some instances Dr Taylor will use sutures that require removal - if this is the case, our nurse will remove these at your post-op review 1 week after your procedure.

## WOUND & DRESSING CARE

### Open revision sites

In most cases, your wound will be covered with Demabond Prineo® (a surgical tape with glue adhesive), which usually remains in place for 3–4 weeks. This dressing is water-resistant, so you may shower, gently pat the area dry afterwards, and then replace your bra.

In some instances, an absorbent outer dressing may be placed over the top; this dressing must be kept dry and is typically removed after one week, leaving the underlying Demabond Prineo® dressing in place

### 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 3-4 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 a good moisturiser (e.g. Sorbolene or QV) or Bio-Oil for 2 minutes, twice daily. Wipe off any excess product, then apply either:

- A silicone gel, which dries to form a protective film over the scar, or
- Silicone tape.

Continue this treatment 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.

## Notes

## 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.