

Information leaflet for people who are considering undergoing breast reduction surgery.

Bey By Bergman Clinics – April 2022

In this leaflet, you will read information about breast reduction surgery: why and when to undergo the procedure, the consultation, the preparation, the surgery, the period after the procedure, the result, and lastly, the complications and risks that may arise. Your personal situation and options for treatment can only be discussed during a personal conversation. This leaflet serves as preparation and/or addition to your conversation with the plastic surgeon.

Why and when

Heavy or sagging breasts can cause physical discomfort, such as neck, back and shoulder pain. The breasts can feel tender or even painful. Breast reduction procedures are often performed for medical reasons. In addition, women may be less happy, or even profoundly unhappy, with the appearance of their breasts, because they do not match the rest of their body. In such cases, breast reduction surgery can be performed for cosmetic reasons. If you are experiencing any of the problems listed above and they make you unhappy, you may have good reason to consider a procedure. Breast reduction surgery may be a good option for you.

During breast reduction surgery, the excess skin and breast tissue is removed and the nipple is relocated. This results in a smaller breast. The upper part of the breast will not become fuller after breast reduction surgery.

Consultation

During a non-binding consultation with the plastic surgeon, you will have the opportunity to discuss your wishes and complaints. He/she will examine your breasts and discuss with you whether a breast reduction will sufficiently resolve your problem. Next, your questions will be answered and you will receive the most detailed possible information about the preparation, the procedure, the expected result and the possible complications. It is not possible to guarantee a cup size prior to such a procedure. The width of your breasts will not be reduced. Having the wrong idea about these factors may result in disappointment.

If the surgeon is not convinced that your problem can be adequately resolved, he/she will discuss this with you, as well. If possible, the surgeon will propose a different solution (for example a breast lift). If you wish, you can be referred to a colleague for a second opinion.

Cosmetic surgery is not covered by health insurance. Reimbursement of medically necessary surgery depends on the criteria set by the healthcare insurance company for this procedure. You can consult your healthcare insurance company and/or policy terms and conditions to check these criteria. The specialist cannot deviate from these criteria. The current rules for reimbursement may change in the future.

Your own responsibilities prior to your surgery:

You should observe a number of preparations in the period prior to your surgery, such as:

- **Stopping blood thinners (anticoagulants):**

You may need to stop taking your blood-thinning medication prior to the surgery. The plastic surgeon will inform you about this. In addition, you will attend a pre-operative screening with the anaesthesiology assistant several weeks prior to your surgery, in which your health and the medication policy will be discussed. This included a discussion of which blood-thinning medication you need to stop using (temporarily). If your prescribing physician does not approve the temporary discontinuation of blood-thinning medication, then the scheduled surgery cannot take place at Bey by Bergman Clinics.

- **Submit your general medication overview (GMO):**

If you are using medication, this overview can be obtained from your pharmacy. You can also give us permission to share your medication details via the National Exchange Point.

- **Submit the signed Informed Consent Form:**

You will receive this form once your surgery has been scheduled.

- **Pay the invoice according to the terms of payment*.**

ALCOHOL POLICY:

- No alcohol for 48 hours before surgery and 2 weeks after surgery.

SMOKING POLICY:

- Smoking has a negative effect on wound healing.
- No smoking for 4 weeks before surgery and 4 weeks after surgery.

NAIL VARNISH POLICY:

- There is no need to remove nail varnish, gel nails or acrylic nails prior to the surgery.

DRUGS POLICY:

- Use of drugs like XTC, methamphetamine, heroin or cocaine must be stopped at least 1 week before surgery. This can otherwise cause severe heart rhythm disorders during the operation or reduce the effect of anaesthetics. This does not apply to prescription amphetamine use for AD(H)D.
- The same rules as for smoking apply to cannabis.

FASTING POLICY:

- Please refer to the anaesthesiology leaflet for the fasting policy.

Good idea to purchase before the surgery:

- Paracetamol 500 mg, 2 tablets 4x daily
- Naproxen (Aleve) 250 mg 2x daily, if necessary (reduce this pain medication before paracetamol)
- Pantoprazole (gastric protector) 20 mg 1x daily (with use of Naproxen)
- Cotton sanitary pads
- Non-sterile gauze

The surgery

- The plastic surgeon often marks the area of skin on your breasts that needs to be removed just before surgery.
- The procedure can be performed in various ways. This depends on the size of your breasts. The plastic surgeon will inform you about the most suitable method before the surgery.
- The most commonly used technique involves making your breast smaller by removing skin and breast tissue from the underside of your breast and moving the nipple and areola up, whilst attached to a stem with its own blood supply. The areola will often be reduced in size too. This procedure results in an anchor-shaped scar. All wounds will be closed with internal soluble sutures.

Sometimes a drain is left behind in the breast(s) during the surgery. This is a tube attached to a vacuum bottle, to suction off any excess blood or wound exudate. The removed breast tissue is sent to the pathologist for examination, to check for any abnormalities.

If you are allowed home, somebody must accompany you home. You may not drive a vehicle yourself. We also recommend that you do not spend the first 24 hours alone at home.

After the procedure

You will experience some pain after any procedure. This is normal. The breasts will feel painful and swollen on days 2 and 3, meaning that the pain will be most severe on these days. You can take the prescribed pain medication for this pain. Due to high tension in the tissue, the wound can open spontaneously in some places about one or two weeks after the surgery. There is no need to worry about this. You should rinse the open wound with the shower head every day and then dress it with a sanitary pad. The sanitary pad ensures that the wound is not pulled open again every time the dressing is removed. The open wounds will heal spontaneously over the course of four to eight weeks. Please contact the number +31 (0)88 9000535 if you have any questions about this.

Recovery period

Starting from the day after the surgery, you may:

- Sleep on your back or side.
- Shower on a daily basis at home.
- Use sanitary pads or non-sterile gauze for any oozing of the wound at home.
- The wound can open spontaneously in some places after about two weeks. In that case, you should rinse the wound under the shower every day.
- Mobilise according to the pain, listen to your body.
- Increase your activities further each day.
- You can start driving and cycling 2 weeks after surgery (this depends on your healthcare insurance company).
- Sauna, bath, swimming pool and exercise after 6 weeks.

You will be fitted with a sports bra after the surgery.

You will wear the pressure garment:

- Day and night during the first 2 weeks
- During the day in weeks 3 and 4
- As required in weeks 5 and 6, you can also wear an underwire/push-up bra then

You will need to use SPF 30 sun cream to protect the scars against the sun during the first year. Ask your specialist about any restrictions in your travel plans after your procedure.

You will visit the nurses and the specialist for check-ups after the surgery. We want to remind you that it is important for you to attend these follow-up appointments. This allows the nurse and the medical specialist to monitor the progress of your recovery. They can also offer advice if you have any questions regarding the information provided above.

The result

Sometimes the breasts do not achieve their final shape immediately. The tissue needs time to heal properly and achieve their final shape. The final result of the breast reduction can by and large be evaluated after twelve weeks. The breasts will be smaller. Sometimes it takes a while longer for the breasts to achieve their definitive shape

After the breast reduction, you will have scars that will always remain visible. These scars will become less visible over time. The location and the size of the scars depend on the amount of excess skin that has been removed and the shape of your breasts.

The most commonly used technique results in an anchor-shaped scar: the scar runs around the areola, vertical under the nipple and ends horizontally in the fold below the breast. It is impossible to predict how the scars will heal. The scars will initially be fiery and red. The scars will fade over time. The final state of the scars depends – among other factors – on your skin and your predisposition to forming scar tissue.

A breast reduction does not make it harder to examine your breasts using X-rays (mammogram) or by physical examination for (possible) lumps in the breast. The breast reduction surgery does not increase the risk of developing a malignant breast condition. Breast reduction surgery does not include the removal of the excess tissue that some women have under their arms and on their back. A separate procedure is required for this.

Most women are satisfied with the result of the breast reduction. Unfortunately, the result is not always permanent. Pregnancy, weight loss and the natural ageing process can cause breasts to sag again. If this happens, you can consider repeating this procedure. Perhaps you are not satisfied with the result, for example because you had different expectations. Please be sure to mention this.

Complications and risks

The plastic surgeon always invests a great deal of time, care and personal attention in your treatment. However, complications do unfortunately occur: no procedure is entirely free of the risk of complications. The normal risks of surgery – such as thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, post-op bleeding and wound infection – also apply to this surgery. Specific complications can also occur:

- The most common complication after a breast reduction is a post-op bleed (a chance of 1% to 2%). This will result in extra swelling and pain. A post-op bleed usually occurs within the first hours after the surgery. If a post-op bleed occurs, then you will require further surgery to remove the excess blood and to stop the bleeding.
- Sometimes an infection develops: the breast becomes red and warm to the touch and you will develop a fever. You must contact us if this happens.
- The blood circulation in the wound margins may also be inadequate. Very rarely this can result in the tissue and even (a part of) the nipple dying.
- You may experience temporary reduced sensation in your nipples. This sensation usually recovers spontaneously over time. The recovery is not always complete if the nipple has been moved over a larger distance.
- Due to high tension in the tissue, the wound under the breast can open spontaneously in some places about one or two weeks after the surgery. These wounds will heal spontaneously over the course of four to eight weeks.
- Some of the milk ducts leading to the nipples can be severed during the surgery. As a result, you may not be able to breastfeed after the surgery. The milk production will need to be stopped during any future pregnancy and delivery, in order to prevent congestion of the breasts. Please inform your midwife, GP or gynaecologist of this.
- It is not possible to guarantee that the breasts will be one hundred percent identical (symmetrical).

Always contact us after surgery in the following cases:

- If a hole develops in the wound area
- Significantly increased swelling of the wound or the surgical area
- Pain, if the pain medication does not help or the pain even increases
- Redness and swelling of the wound
- Feeling ill and/or a fever, above 38°C (measured via the anus)
- Persistent nausea
- Acute tightness across the chest
- Acute pain in the leg, possibly with swelling

- Being unable to urinate, whilst drinking normal quantities
- Concerns or doubts

We can be contacted for emergencies 24 hours per day, via +31 (0)88 9000 567.

For non-urgent matters, please call +31 (0)88 9000 535 during office hours.

More information

If you have any further questions after reading this leaflet, you can ask your plastic surgeon to answer these questions at any time. You can schedule an appointment for a consultation. You can contact the clinic on telephone number +31 (0)88 9000 535 about this.

Complaints and privacy regulations

Bey by Bergman Clinics has complaints and privacy regulations in place. A copy of these regulations can be obtained from our locations and on our website www.beyclinics.nl.

Cooling-off period

Bey by Bergman Clinics acts in accordance with the guidelines of the NVPC and thus grants its clients a 'cooling-off' period. This is the time between the first consultation in which the procedure is proposed and the decision to go ahead with the procedure. We give our clients a cooling-off period of one week for cosmetic surgical procedures.

Terms and conditions of payment*

The first instalment of 25% of the fee for the procedure must be paid within 5 days after receipt of the invoice. The remainder of the fee should be received by us no later than 4 weeks prior to the surgery date. Cash payments are only possible following agreement with your consultant.

If your surgery has been approved by your health insurance company, you are responsible for reading the terms and conditions of your insurance policy to check that your insurer will refund the entire surgery fee.

Cancellation policy

You must cancel your surgery in writing. Cancellation within 3 weeks prior to your surgery will result in costs already incurred to the sum of 25% of the costs of surgery being billed to you. Cancellation within 48 hours prior to the agreed date of surgery is only permitted in the case of absolute and demonstrable force majeure. In all other cases of non-insured care, you will be billed for the full amount of the agreed surgery fee. If you are undergoing a procedure whose costs are covered by your healthcare insurance company, your procedure cannot be rescheduled at Bey by Bergman Clinics. The aforementioned cancellation policy also applies if the surgery cannot be performed due to failure on your part to fulfil your responsibilities as listed in this leaflet.

Finally

This leaflet serves as preparation and as a supplement to the conversation with the plastic surgeon and as a 'reference' for after the surgery. However, such a description can never apply completely to each individual situation. Plastic and aesthetic surgery is not an exact science; this written information should in no way be construed as a guarantee for the course of events and result of your procedure.