

GENERAL INFORMATION

Breast lift or mastopexy is a surgical procedure to raise and reshape sagging breasts. Factors such as pregnancy, nursing, weight change, aging, and gravity produce changes in the appearance of a woman's breasts. As the skin loses its elasticity, the breasts often lose their shape and begin to sag. Breast lift or mastopexy is a surgery performed by plastic surgeons to raise and reshape sagging breasts. This operation can also reduce the size of the areola, the darker skin around the nipple. If your breasts are small or have lost volume after pregnancy, breast implants inserted in conjunction with mastopexy can increase both firmness and size. Breasts of any size can be lifted, but the results may not last as long in women with heavy, large breasts. Mastopexy does leave permanent, noticeable scars on the breasts, and the breasts will be smaller than your current size.

ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS

Mastopexy is an elective surgical operation. Alternative treatment would consist of not undergoing the surgical procedure or wearing supportive undergarments to lift sagging breasts. If breasts are large and sagging, a reduction mammoplasty may be considered. Risks and potential complications are associated with alternative surgical forms of treatment.

SPECIFIC RISKS OF BREAST LIFT (MASTOPEXY) SURGERY

Change in Nipple and Skin Sensation:

You may experience a diminished (or loss of) sensitivity of the nipples and the skin of your breast. Partial or permanent loss of nipple and skin sensation can occur after a mastopexy in one or both nipples. Changes in sensation may affect sexual response or the ability to breastfeed a baby.

Breast Augmentation and Simultaneous Mastopexy:

Risks associated with the potential use of breast implants are covered in a separate informed consent document according to the type of implant selected. However, patients who choose to undergo breast implant augmentation and elect to have it at the same time as a breast lift (mastopexy) may be at increased risk for necrosis of the skin, nipples, and breast tissue due to decreased blood supply to the tissues.

Mastopexy Performed at the Time of Breast Implant Removal Surgery:

Patients who choose to undergo the simultaneous removal of breast implants and capsules and elect to have it at the same time as a breast lift (mastopexy) may be at increased risk for the necrosis of the skin, nipples, and breast tissue due to decreased blood supply to the tissues from earlier surgery. Risks associated with the removal of breast implants are covered in a separate informed consent document.

Skin Contour Irregularities:

Contour and shape irregularities may occur after mastopexy. Visible and palpable wrinkling may occur. One breast may be smaller than the other. Nipple position and shape will not be identical on each side. Residual skin irregularities at the ends of the incisions or "dog ears" are always a possibility when there is excessive redundant skin. This may improve with time, or it can be surgically corrected.

Delayed Healing:

Wound disruption or delayed wound healing is possible. Some areas of the breast skin or nipple region may not heal normally and may take a long time to heal. Areas of skin or nipple tissue may die. This may require frequent dressing changes or further surgery to remove the non-healed tissue. Individuals who have decreased blood supply to breast tissue from past surgery or radiation therapy may be at increased risk for delayed wound healing and poor surgical outcomes. Smokers have a greater risk of skin loss and wound healing complications.

Breast Disease:

Breast disease and breast cancer can occur independently of breast lift surgery. Individuals with a personal history or family history of breast cancer may be at a higher risk of developing breast cancer than a woman with no family history of this disease. It is recommended that all women perform periodic self-examination of their breasts, undergo routine mammography.