

Breast Lift

Faeza Kazmier, M.D.

Over the years, factors such as pregnancy, nursing, and the force of gravity take their toll on a woman's breasts. As the skin loses its elasticity, the breasts often lose their shape and firmness and begin to sag. A breast lift, or mastopexy, is a surgical procedure to raise and reshape sagging breasts--at least, for a time. (No surgery can permanently delay the effects of gravity.) Mastopexy can also reduce the size of the areola, the darker skin surrounding the nipple.



If your breasts are small or have lost volume--for example, after pregnancy--breast implants inserted in conjunction with mastopexy can increase both their firmness and their size. If you're considering a breast lift, this brochure will give you a basic understanding of the procedure--when it can help, how it's performed, and what results you can expect.

The best candidates for mastopexy are healthy, emotionally-stable women who are realistic about what the surgery can accomplish. The best results are usually achieved in women with small, sagging breasts. Breasts of any size can be lifted, but the results may not last as long in heavy breasts.

Many women seek mastopexy because pregnancy and nursing have left them with stretched skin and less volume in their breasts. However, if you're planning to have more children, it may be a good idea to postpone your breast lift. While there are no special risks that affect future pregnancies (for example, mastopexy usually doesn't interfere with breast-feeding), pregnancy is likely to stretch your breasts again and offset the results of the procedure.

Mastopexy does leave noticeable, permanent scars, although they'll be covered by your bra or bathing suit. (Poor healing and wider scars are more common in smokers.) The procedure can also leave you with unevenly positioned nipples, or a permanent loss of feeling in your nipples or breasts. Healing is a gradual process. Although you may be up and about in a day or two, don't plan on returning to work for a week or more, depending on how you feel. And avoid lifting anything over your head for six weeks.

I will make every effort to make your scars as inconspicuous as possible. Still, it's important to remember that mastopexy scars are extensive and permanent. They often remain lumpy and red for months, then gradually become less obvious, sometimes eventually fading to thin white lines. Fortunately, the scars can usually be placed so that you can wear even low-cut tops.

You should also keep in mind that a breast lift won't keep you firm forever--the effects of gravity, pregnancy, aging, and weight fluctuations will eventually take their toll again. Women who have implants along with their breast lift may find the results last longer.

Your satisfaction with a breast lift is likely to be greater if you understand the procedure thoroughly and if your expectations are realistic.