

Mastopexy — Breast-Lift Surgery

Mastopexy is breast cosmetic surgery for sagging breasts (ptosis). As women age, their bodies reduce or stop producing some female hormones. This causes the breast to lose much of its elasticity and firm glandular tissues leaving an excess of the top layer of skin. Previous pregnancies and breastfeeding may have also caused stretching of the breast skin and ligaments. Post-menopausal women experience sagging breasts.

Breast sagging is a natural condition for women and is of no medical significance. In fact, some cultures in other countries view sagging of the breasts as a valued mark of maturity and a time for elevated esteem for a woman. In our culture, however, women often view sagging breasts as a loss of their body image. For these women, cosmetic breast surgery can remove the excess skin and restore the breast to a more youthful appearance. The surgical procedure is often referred to as a “face lift” for the breasts and is an option women should investigate if they are unhappy with the appearance of their breasts.

The degree of sagging is determined by comparing the position of the nipple to the natural fold (inframammary fold) under the breasts. This also identifies the type of surgery required. An incision is made around the areola to minimize the scar. Significant degrees of sagging may require more extensive incisions. During surgery, the loose skin is removed and, most often, the nipple and areola may need repositioning. Some women choose to have an implant inserted to replace the lost glandular tissue.

A consultation with a reconstructive surgeon will provide you with information about the type of surgery recommended to restore your breasts to their premenopausal position. Because the aging process continues, results from surgery may not be permanent. Like a face-lift, breast mastopexy may need to be repeated to maintain the desired appearance.

Surgery and Recovery:

- Surgery is usually performed under general anesthesia
- Overnight hospitalization required occasionally
- Bulky dressings will be applied after surgery
- Bra should be worn day and night for several weeks to support the breasts and reduce pain
- Recovery time is approximately two weeks for the most extensive surgery

Complications After Surgery May Include:

- Hematomas (bleeding under the skin)
- Infection
- Delayed healing
- Asymmetry (breasts may not be exactly the same size)

Insurance Coverage:

- Insurance providers usually do **not** cover mastopexy because it is considered cosmetic surgery—unessential for good health. However, check with your provider.
- Ask the reconstructive surgeon to estimate the cost of the procedure.

Additional Information:
