Lipomodelling (Fat Transfer) in Breast Surgery

What is Lipomodelling?

Lipomodelling or fat grafting (sometimes called lipofilling, or fat transfer) is a procedure used to improve the contour of the breast following breast surgery. It can also be used for breast augmentation (enlargement). The lipomodelling process allows relocation of fat to change the shape, volume and/or profile of the breast. It involves careful harvesting, refining and grafting the fat from elsewhere in the body and injectioning it into the required area. The result can give a soft, more natural appearance, and is minimally invasive.

How is it done?

Fat is harvested from your own body, often the abdomen, thighs, buttocks or hips in a procedure called liposuction (a term often used in cosmetic surgery). The fat cells are harvested through small incisions into the skin with a special needle and a syringe. The removed fat cells are concentrated using special equipments, before being injected back into the breast with great care and precision. Considerable expertise is required on by the surgeons. The procedure is performed under a general anaesthetic, and may require one or more sessions depending on the amount of graft required. Informed consent is required, with a full explanation of risks and benefits.

Preparing for breast lipomodelling surgery:

Most patients do not experience any problems, but you should be as fit as possible before surgery and not actively dieting and should stop smoking several weeks before surgery.

Before the surgery you should stop taking aspirin or anti-inflammatory medicines.

Are there any side effects or complications?

Lipomodelling is safe when performed by a fully qualified and trained surgeon. Common complications are bruising, swelling, haematoma and altered sensation. Less common complications are fat necrosis (where the injected fat can die off), and calcifications. Significant complications such as infections or fat clots into the blood stream are very rare.

Long term, a palpable mass resulting from fat necrosis may be difficult to distinguish clinically from local recurrence, this may lead to additional imaging and biopsy to confirm.

You may experience some swelling and discomfort at the donor site, (as with any liposuction) – this can take a couple of weeks to settle and we advise wearing compression garments post-surgery. Bruising and skin discolouration may occur but this is usually temporary. The areas treated may feel numb for several weeks following the procedure. Some of the transfered fat into your breast may disappear over time and the procedure may require repeating after a few months. Irregularities in contour may occur, but should settle in time.

Rare complications are contour irregularities in the donor site, damage to breast implants (if you have one) during the fat injection in which case the implant may need replacing, and damage to other adjacent structures.

There is no evidence that the risk of local breast cancer recurrence is increased after lipomodelling.

compassionate care

Post operation recovery

The surgery is carried out in the operating theatre usually as a day case procedure. You should rest for 24 hours, and slowly increase your activity. Normal non-strenuous activity can be resumed after 2-3 days.

You will have a few small stitches to close the incisions, these are normally dissolvable. We recommend you to bring in a sports or very comfortable bra and a supportive pants. We advise that you wear a snug girdle, long legged knickers, or cycling shorts over the donor site for 2-3 weeks day and night after the surgery. This will help with reducing the swelling and bruising and also with the contouring of the donor area. You must ensure your bra does not put pressure on the lipomodelled area and you must wear it day and night for 2-3 weeks.

If the area is painful, you can take usual painkillers as needed, but do not exceed the recommended dose.

Studies have shown most patients feel the outcome of the procedure is good, with patient reporting significant improvements in their breast size and shape.

Your surgeon will discuss follow up post procedure.

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Clinical Nurse Specialist in Breast Care
Calderdale Royal Hospital
Telephone (01422) 222722/222723

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obrat'te se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym fomacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

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