

Patient information

Lipomodelling (fat transfer) in breast surgery

Lipomodelling (sometimes called fat transfer or lipofilling) is a procedure used to try and improve the shape or size of the breast. It can be used on patients who have had breast reconstruction or patients who have had wide local excision of the breast. The aim of lipomodelling is to improve the cosmetic look of your breast without having to have more complex surgery. It may give the breast a soft, more natural appearance and may make your breasts more balanced.

Fat is taken from your own body, usually the thighs but sometimes the abdomen or hips in a procedure called liposuction (removal of fat). The fat is taken through small cuts in the skin. The fat cells are then separated from the body fluid using special equipment and then injected into the breast area. This is performed under a general anaesthetic and is usually a day case procedure.

The procedure will usually have to be repeated (often several times) until the breast is the size/shape required. Your breast may be an uneven shape until you have had all your treatments but could remain uneven permanently.

Potential complications

- Swelling or bruising at the donor site (where the fat is removed) which can take one to two weeks to settle. Wearing cycling shorts or supportive underwear may help reduce this.
- Infection to the donor site or the breast.
- The donor site may become numb or oversensitive for several weeks and occasionally the numbness can be permanent.
- Contour irregularities (unevenness of the skin) in the donor site due to fat harvest.

- Repeated procedures are often necessary as some of the fat injected is naturally lost over time
- Fat necrosis to the breast area. This is where some of the fat injected does not survive and repairs itself forming chalky deposits or oil cysts which are felt as lumps. This can lead to further investigations such as ultra sound scans or biopsies.
- New changes on mammograms due to calcium changes. This increases the chance of needing a biopsy if there is any uncertainty about the new changes.
- Damage to implants during fat injection.

Following your procedure

- You should rest for 24 hours and then gradually increase your activity. Normal activity can resume after two to three days. Heavier activities will take longer.
- You may be uncomfortable after the procedure. You should take pain killers as advised.
- Driving – you may drive after about a week or when you are comfortable to drive again.
- Ensure your bra does not put pressure on the lipomodelled area.
- We will see you in clinic after one week to remove the dressings and sutures and to assess the wounds. Keep the dressings dry until you are seen in clinic.
- We will see you again three months following your surgery to assess the results and discuss further procedures as necessary.

If you would like any further information or have any concerns please contact the breast care nurses on 01284 713281

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)
<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>

