



Mastopexy

Plastic Surgery

MASTOPEXY OVERVIEW

What is the goal of mastopexy?

Mastopexy is the plastic surgery name for a breast lift operation. Mastopexy surgery aims to lift the breasts and enhance their shape, giving a more youthful and aesthetic appearance. There are a variety of techniques of mastopexy, each of which is described below, and the technique used should be tailored to you individually. A mastopexy will not reduce the size of your breasts, but works by removing excess skin and tightening the breast tissue on the inside.

What should I think about prior to my consultation?

Before coming to see your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon, you should think about what you are hoping to achieve from a mastopexy. Points to consider can include:

- Why do I want a mastopexy?
- Are there any particular aspects of the appearance of my breasts I am unhappy with?
- Are there significant differences in size and shape between my breasts that I am unhappy with?
- Is my weight steady or am I continuing to lose weight as part of a diet or weight loss programme? If so, it is better to postpone surgery until your weight has plateaued for around 6 months.
- Why am I thinking of having a mastopexy at this time in my life? (You should not consider having cosmetic surgery if you are going through any instability in your personal circumstances.)
- Am I considering having future pregnancies and breast feeding? While not an absolute reason not to have a mastopexy if you are considering having children in the near future, it may be best to postpone a mastopexy until afterwards. The hormonal changes of pregnancy and breast feeding affect the size and shape of your breasts and can stretch the breast tissue again.

What are the limitations of mastopexy?

The outcome of your operation will be partly determined by the shape and size of your breasts and the quality of your skin and tissues before surgery:

- If you have excess fatty fullness around the sides of your breasts going under your arms, a standard mastopexy may not satisfactorily address this. Additional liposuction may be needed to achieve the best result possible.

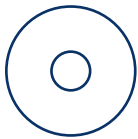
- Mastopexy may affect nipple sensation (for more detail please see below). If this is a problem for you, please think twice about having a mastopexy.
- Mastopexy surgery always results in scars. If scars on your breasts are a problem for you, you should not have a mastopexy.
- Although breast feeding may be possible after a mastopexy, there is a chance that the operation may affect your ability to breast feed. Therefore, if this is of concern to you, it may be better to wait until you have completed your family before having a mastopexy.

What types of mastopexy are there?

Mastopexy techniques may be considered according to the scars they leave behind:

Circumareolar mastopexy

This technique leaves a scar around the areola (the pigmented part around the nipple). It is suitable for small breast lifts in those people with good skin quality, often in combination with a breast implant, or as part of a breast asymmetry correction procedure.



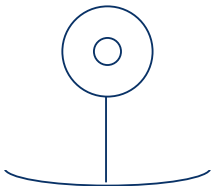
Vertical scar/circumvertical mastopexy

This type of mastopexy leaves a scar around the areola and vertically down from the areola to the breast crease. Your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon recommends this technique of mastopexy wherever possible. However, it is more frequently used when you have good skin quality (as assessed by your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon) and not too much skin excess (so, for example, it may not be suitable if you have lost a great deal of weight and have very loose skin). In the vertical scar techniques of mastopexy, there is often a degree of wrinkling of the skin below the nipple, which lasts for several weeks after surgery. This is intentional, and helps the breasts to achieve a good long term shape. Therefore, if you are undergoing a vertical scar mastopexy, please do not worry if you notice this wrinkling – it is meant to be there. It usually disappears by 2 months after surgery.



T-shape/anchor/Wise pattern breast reduction

This is the most common form of mastopexy performed, and involves a scar around the areola, a scar vertically down to the breast crease as well as a scar along the breast crease itself. It is suitable for those with a large amount of skin excess that needs to be removed.



Can liposuction be performed at the same time?

If you have excess fatty tissue at the sides of your breasts that runs towards your armpit, liposuction is an excellent way to address this. In certain people, it can make the difference between a good result and an excellent result. Liposuction aims to empty out the fat pockets and then allow the skin to shrink down at the side of the chest to help produce a more pleasing breast and chest shape. However, it is not always recommended, and your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon will discuss with you whether they feel you will benefit from additional liposuction. In addition, even if your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon recommends it, it may not be something you are keen on having, and of course, the final decision is yours!

What does my Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon examine for during my consultation?

A female chaperone is always available to be present during your examination. Your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon will ask you to take your top clothes off and remain standing or sitting on the edge of the examination couch to examine you. They will make the following assessments of your breasts:

- Your general shape and skin quality
- The amount of loose skin on your breasts
- The degree of asymmetry between your breasts (no-one has identical breasts, but some people are more asymmetric than others)
- The amount of lift your nipples will require for your mastopexy
- The size, weight and fullness of your breasts
- The best technique that will suit your breasts

They will also make the following measurements:

- From the bottom of your neck to your nipples
- From your nipples to the breast crease (inframammary crease or IMC)
- Your breast width

Photography

Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeons always take preoperative photographs from a variety of standardised positions. These can be referred to with you during your consultation to point out various attributes of your breasts, as well as forming an essential part of your medical records. Your face will not appear in any of the photographs, and your consent for the photographs will be obtained.

Postoperative bras

Following mastopexy surgery it is highly recommended that you wear a supportive non-underwired sports bra for as much of the day and night as possible, ideally only removing it for showering. This helps to support the breasts in their new shape. Post-surgical bras may be purchased from a number of different suppliers including Purity Bridge and the Purity Bridge team will be able to advise you on this, or alternatively, good quality sports bras from high street retailers may also be used. The support bra is usually worn for about 6 weeks following surgery.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE SURGERY ITSELF

What happens when I get to hospital?

When you arrive at the hospital you will be shown to your room on the ward and a nurse will go through a detailed questionnaire assessing your health, your allergies and other relevant details (much of which will have been covered before with your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon). You will be asked to change into a hospital gown in preparation for surgery. Your anaesthetist will visit you to assess you prior to the planned general anaesthetic.

Do I see my Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon before my operation?

You will always see your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon before your operation. They will spend some time reviewing everything you have discussed before and make sure you have no unanswered questions or nagging worries. Once you have confirmed you are happy to go ahead, they will ask you to sign a consent form if you have not already done so. They will then carefully draw important markings on your breasts in planning for your surgery. They may also take clinical photographs of your markings for your medical records.

What does the operation involve?

The procedure is performed under a general anaesthetic (with you asleep) usually with an overnight stay in hospital. You will be asked to arrive at the hospital around 2 hours before your operation and you should be fasting for at least 6 hours before surgery. This means that you cannot eat or drink anything for 6 hours before your operation. You may, however, drink water up to 3 hours beforehand.

Initially, if planned, any liposuction will be performed prior to the mastopexy procedure itself. As outlined above, the mastopexy requires the lifting of your nipple and the reshaping of the whole breast. Your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon will use their carefully planned markings that they have drawn on your breasts to guide their surgery. After removing the excess skin, they will use carefully placed internal stitches to reshape your breasts (glanduloplasty stitches). Once the breast has been reshaped, the skin and the nipple are stitched in, using absorbable stitches. The wounds are dressed with surgical tapes, which stay on for about 2 weeks following surgery. A surgical drain may be placed in each breast to draw off any wound fluid produced. If used, the drains usually come out the following day.

How long does the surgery take?

The operation itself takes around 2 hours, however, you will be away from your hospital room for longer than this, as it takes additional time for the general anaesthetic, preparation in theatres for your operation and for you to wake up comfortably.

Will it be painful?

Most patients describe a feeling of being achy in the initial post-operative period rather than pain, but this rapidly improves. If you have had liposuction, there may be a dull ache and bruising in the areas of treatment. Usually any discomfort is easily controlled with tablet painkillers, a supply of which will be given to you on your discharge from hospital. In addition, as your breasts heal, it is normal to experience occasional shooting pains or electric shock type pains. These are caused by small nerve endings being trapped in scar tissue, and are only a temporary effect.

What else can I expect after surgery?

You should be able to get out of bed later on the same day or evening of surgery. If used, the drains can be

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uncomfortable, but do not stay in for very long. Your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon will usually put you in a supportive garment following your surgery, and back on the ward, the nurses will help you to get into your bra.

You will have compression stockings on your legs that will have been fitted prior to surgery – it is vital that you keep these on and continue to wear them for 2 weeks after your operation. They have an important role in minimising the chances of developing blood clots in the legs.

When will I leave hospital?

Your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon will see you later on, the day of your surgery and again the following morning (and every day that you are in hospital). They will check your breasts are soft and not tender, as well as assess the amount of fluid in the drains. If placed, the drains are usually removed 24 hours after surgery and you will go home the day after surgery. Some people produce more fluid than others into their drains. If you are producing a lot of fluid into your drains, your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon may discharge you from hospital with your drains still in, with a plan to take them out in another day or so. Should this be necessary, how to look after your drains at home will be carefully explained to you.

What should I do when I get home?

Once you get home, you need to achieve a balance between taking things easy, but not lying down and doing nothing, as this may increase the risk of certain complications. You should take short gentle walks and make sure you drink plenty of fluids – these will both reduce the risks of developing deep venous thrombosis (DVT) in the legs.

Your wounds will have been dressed with surgical tapes, which are shower proof. You should therefore shower every day, but ensure the shower hose is not directed towards the main wound (as this may encourage the tapes to come off too early). The easiest thing is to face away from the shower for most of your showering. All wounds/tapes may be dried by gently patting with a clean towel or kitchen towel, or alternatively a hair dryer may be used on a cold setting.

What about wearing my bra?

Ideally your bra should be worn day and night for the first 6 weeks after surgery. However, everyone is

different and some people vary the length of time they wear it for. It is important that your bra is not too tight – it should be firm but comfortable.

What is the recovery period?

Most people will be able to return to sedentary activity (i.e. an office job or light duties) at around 2 weeks, depending upon how they feel. Heavier duties, or physical exercise should be postponed for at least 6 weeks after surgery, to allow the breasts to heal properly.

Occasionally, there may be an area of delayed wound healing, often where a dissolvable stitch has not dissolved quite as quickly as it should. These stitches may “spit” out of the wound (much in the same way as a splinter may start to work its way out of your finger after it has been there for a few days). This will generally resolve and if necessary, your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon can remove any spitting stitch in the outpatient clinic.

How long before daily activities may be resumed?

As outlined above, you should avoid all heavy physical activity and contact sports for at least 6 weeks following the surgery. Driving should be avoided for between 2 and 4 weeks. Light exercise, such as gentle sessions on an exercise bike can be started at 4 weeks.

How can I get the best scar possible?

There are a number of strategies that can help scars to mature and soften quickly. The first, and most important of these is regular moisturising and massaging of the scar. This can usually be started from around 3 weeks following surgery. A non-perfumed moisturising cream should be used, and the scar should be massaged for 5-10 minutes every day. If the scar feels firm, it is important to be firm with your massage. Your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon will discuss massage with you in more detail at the appropriate post-operative visit.

In addition to massage, a number of products are commercially available that help with scarring. The most tried and tested are silicone products. These are available in either sticky-backed gel sheets or alternatively as gels that come in a tube. In order for these products to work properly, they need to be worn on the scar for 23 hours a day, every day for several months.

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You will always see your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon before your operation. They will spend some time reviewing everything you have discussed before and make sure you have no unanswered questions or niggling worries. Once you have confirmed you are happy to go ahead, they will ask you to sign a consent form. They will then carefully draw important markings on your breast and chest wall in planning for your surgery and may also take clinical photographs of your markings for your records.

SUMMARY OF TYPICAL TIMELINE FOLLOWING OPERATION

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(this may vary on occasion)

DAY OF SURGERY

- ✓ Review in hospital by your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon for surgical planning and surgery itself

DAY 1 AFTER SURGERY

- ✓ Review in hospital by your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon
- ✓ Removal of drains (if used)
- ✓ If all well, discharge from hospital

WEEK 1 AFTER SURGERY

- ✓ Hospital appointment for nurse check of your breasts

WEEK 2

- ✓ Appointment with your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon
- ✓ Tapes on wounds removed - further tapes may be applied

WEEK 4

- ✓ Start to moisturise and massage wound if not already doing so (to be continued until scars fade after about 1 year)
- ✓ Gentle exercise may start (e.g. light programme on exercise bike)
- ✓ Can drive by now

WEEK 6

- ✓ Exercise/heavy physical activity may gradually be started
- ✓ May stop wearing support bra (although some people continue for a further 6 weeks)

POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS

What you need to know about the possible effects of surgery and potential complications

Early complications (within the first week of surgery)

Bleeding (haematoma)

If there is any suggestion that bleeding into the breasts has occurred after surgery you will need to go back to the operating theatre to have the bleeding stopped and the wound washed out to evacuate the collected blood. Signs that a haematoma is developing include: the filling up of your drain bottle with blood, swelling of the breast, increasing pain, a swollen and purple nipple and the development of severe bruising.

Infection

Rates of severe infection in mastopexy are low. However, minor wound infections or inflammation may occur. If you have had a Wise pattern (T-shaped) breast reduction, this is most common at the T-junction of the scars. Minor wound infections are dealt with using special dressings and antibiotics where appropriate. If a major infection develops, it might be necessary to go back to the operating theatre to wash out the wound. In severe cases, more than one return trip to theatre may be required, as well as the use of a specialised dressing, to try and get the wound to heal as quickly as possible.

Blood clots

Blood clots in the veins of the legs (DVT – deep venous thrombosis) may occur after mastopexy surgery, which is why important preventative measures are taken (compression stockings, pneumatic calf pumps and blood thinning injections whilst in hospital). You should continue to wear the calf compression stockings for 2 weeks after discharge from hospital. If a DVT does develop, you will need various investigations and treatment as appropriate. A pulmonary embolus (PE) describes a blood clot that has broken off from the DVT and lodged in the blood vessels in the lungs. This can be serious, and again, appropriate investigations and treatment are instigated should this be suspected after your operation.

Intermediate complications (within 6 weeks of surgery)

Suture spitting

As described above, stitches (sutures) that are designed to dissolve sometimes do not dissolve as quickly as they are meant to. In these situations, there is a chance that they can work their way out of the wound and appear as sharp prickly filaments, occasionally with a surrounding area of redness. Should this occur, it is nothing to worry about, and can be dealt with simply in the outpatient clinic. Your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon can remove any sutures that are spitting out of the wound in the clinic, and the wounds should then heal over these areas uneventfully.

Delayed wound healing

In some people the wounds take longer to heal than in others: this may be due to having had a mild infection of the wound, due to a reaction with the stitches or from overdoing it straight after surgery. Normally this is a minor inconvenience, which can be managed with special dressings as an outpatient. Occasionally it can lead to a more severe infection developing as described above.

Nipple problems

As described above, nipples need to be re-sited during mastopexy surgery, and in some women having significant breast lifts, this can mean they need to be moved a long way. If there is any problem with the blood supply to the nipple (possibly because the nipples have had to be moved a long way), this may affect the healing and even the survival of the nipples. In the worst case scenario (which is fortunately very rare) the entire nipple may die. Otherwise, part of the nipple may form a scab, which will eventually heal underneath. This type of problem is at a significantly higher risk of occurring in smokers. If you smoke, we strongly advise you to stop for at least the period before, during and after your surgery. If you are unlucky enough for this to happen, you may require revision surgery in the future to address poor scarring or to reconstruct a new nipple for you. As our Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeons also perform significant numbers of breast reconstructions following breast cancer, they are very experienced in this field. Therefore, not only is the incidence of this happening very low, if it does happen, they will be able to advise you on the best course forward and treat you accordingly.

Fat necrosis

In the same way as there may be some trouble with the blood getting to the nipple to keep it alive, occasionally the same may happen to the fat in the breast. If this happens a pocket of fat may die – this is

known as fat necrosis. If this happens to a small degree, it may just present as firm lumps in the breast. These will usually settle with time and massage. If you have more significant fat necrosis, you may produce an oily discharge from the wound. Depending on the assessment of the degree of fat necrosis, this may either be managed with dressings and wound washouts in the outpatient setting, or if it is more severe, it may require a further trip to the operating theatre for a formal washout of the breast.

Seroma

Normally the fluid that comes out into the drain bottles stops being produced by the body shortly after surgery. Sometimes, however, the body continues to produce this fluid for some time and the fluid can accumulate in the breasts, known as a seroma. If this happens it may be uncomfortable and there is a chance that the fluid can become infected. Therefore should you develop a seroma, it may be necessary for it to be drained. This involves a fine needle being passed into the breast and the fluid sucked out (in a similar manner to how it previously came out into the drain bottle). Your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon may inject a small dose of steroid into the seroma cavity after aspirating (sucking out) the seroma as this has been shown to reduce the recurrence of the seroma. The aspiration may need to be repeated on more than one occasion depending upon your situation. Fortunately this is unusual in mastopexy.

Late complications (after 6 weeks from surgery)

Asymmetry

As described earlier, everyone has a degree of breast asymmetry. Although every effort is taken to achieve the best symmetry possible, there will always be differences between your breasts. If there is a significant difference between your breasts, your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon will discuss this with you and together a plan can be made to address this.

Scarring

The mastopexy scars will fade but this can take 1-2 years. Until this time scars may be red and firm. As described above, regular scar massage and moisturising is important to help the scars to mature and settle down as quickly as possible. Hypertrophic or keloid scars can occasionally occur – these are thickened and lumpy scars that are more common in people of Asian or Afro-Caribbean descent. Should these occur, your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon will discuss with you the best ways of treating them.

Future pregnancies or significant changes in weight

With any future pregnancies, the same hormonal changes will occur in your breasts as they would have done without any surgery. Therefore any changes in size and change to your breasts that would normally occur during pregnancy, will continue to happen. After your pregnancy is over, your breasts will again undergo the same changes that they normally would after a pregnancy. This can mean some residual stretched skin and/or a change in the volume of your breast tissue compared to your pre-pregnancy breasts. Likewise with any significant gain or loss of weight, your breasts will gain or lose weight as they would normally do and this will change the size and shape of your breasts as would have happened before your surgery.

Breast feeding

Breast feeding following mastopexy may be possible and if so it is safe. As the breast tissue has been operated on and moved around, there is a significant chance that you will not be able to breast feed after this surgery.

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The sub-optimal result

Despite a successful mastopexy operation, some patients will feel their breasts are not exactly as they were hoping. This may be due to a number of factors, but can be due to unrealistic expectations (for example, some patients are disappointed that they have visible scars, or that they have mild degrees of asymmetry). It is important to discuss any concerns you have with your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon. If further procedures are warranted, there may be further costs involved and this will be explained. Your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon will speak frankly to you at your initial consultations to discuss what limitations a mastopexy will have in your specific circumstances. It is crucial that you appreciate what you can expect from a breast mastopexy prior to undergoing the surgery.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, most patients are delighted with the results of their surgery. They find they can wear clothes they may never have been able to wear before and going bra shopping is often a whole new experience!

Your Purity Bridge Consultant Plastic Surgeon would be happy to discuss any issues that may have arisen from your reading of this information booklet in addition to any other issues you would like to talk about at your consultation.

NOTES

Other Procedures Offered at Purity Bridge

Facial procedures

Eyelid lift

A blepharoplasty is an excellent operation to brighten up and refresh the eye area in a very natural way. It is hard to tell that someone has had an eyelid lift, apart from seeing how refreshed and well they look!

Rhinoplasty

Nose reshaping can be done to reduce a dorsal hump, address deviations and asymmetries as well as refine the nasal tip. Each nose is different, and each face is different, so the transformation of your nose must be tailored to your individual goals and what is achievable. Nose reshaping can have an incredibly positive impact on people's self esteem and self-consciousness.

Ear correction

A number changes can be made to reshape and reposition ears — these include correction of prominent ears, reshaping of earlobes and correcting split earlobes. Our Purity Bridge specialists usually carry out these operations under local anaesthetic as "office-based" procedures, allowing a quick recovery and excellent result.

Facelift

A facelift remains the gold standard facial rejuvenation procedure. The expert Consultant Plastic Surgeons at Purity Bridge regularly perform a variety of types of facelift — each designed to be bespoke for the individual patient. A facelift should not look pulled or tight, but natural and refreshed.

Breast procedures

Breast enlargement

Breast augmentation enhances a woman's natural breast volume and can restore fullness lost after breast feeding or weight loss. This can be done using a carefully chosen high quality breast implant or using your own fat. A specific plan would be made with you to create the most natural outcome with the least downtime and a long lasting result.

Breast lift

A mastopexy (breast lift) raises the nipple, tightens the breast skin, reduces the size of the areola, restores lost volume to the upper part of the breast and overall produces a perkier and more youthful breast shape. Breast implants can also be used in a breast lift to enhance the volume if needed. This is particularly popular after having children or losing weight.

Nipple surgery

Surgery to modify nipples is usually simple to do under a local anaesthetic as an outpatient procedure. Inverted nipples can be corrected; nipples can be reshaped and even reconstructed after removal for breast cancer treatment.

Body procedures

Liposuction

Liposuction is an ever popular procedure to remove excess fat deposits using tiny incisions. Areas of the body, including chest abdomen, arms, legs and neck, can be re-contoured to create better proportions. It is a body contouring procedure, rather than a weight loss procedure.

Tummy tuck

An abdominoplasty (tummy tuck) is a very popular procedure to re-contour the abdomen, frequently in people after weight loss, or in women to correct the effect of pregnancy. Excess skin and fat is trimmed from the lower belly, and also stretched abdominal muscles are re-tightened to create a flatter, smoother abdominal contour.

Labiaplasty

Labiaplasty is a very personal procedure that reshapes and trims excess labia minora (inner vaginal lips). It is usually performed as an outpatient procedure under local anaesthetic. The results are very natural and the scars are very hard to see.

Lipofilling (fat grafting)

Using fat as a natural filling material has revolutionised approaches to a wide variety of body areas, such as the face, around the eyes and the breasts. Lipofilling is a versatile technique that has a number of applications and is frequently used by our team.

Many other procedures are performed by our specialist team of Consultant Plastic Surgeons at Purity Bridge including:

- Arm lifts
- Thigh lifts
- Body lifts
- Body contouring after massive weight loss
- Breast reduction
- Correction of breast asymmetry
- Breast reconstruction
- Brow lifts
- Facial implants
- Facial bone reshaping and repositioning
- Skin cancer treatment
- Skin lesion excision



CONTACT

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