WATERFRONT
PRIVATE HOSPITAL

PATIENT INFORMATION · AFTERCARE

Breast Augmentation Aftercare

General recovery guidance for breast augmentation (implants) based on Waterfront Private Hospital's written aftercare information. This online guide should be used alongside the official leaflet and the specific instructions given to you by your surgical team.

Typical recovery: 6–8 weeks for full recovery · Reviewed 4 July 2026 · Version 1.0

When to get help — your traffic light guide

RED

Call 999 or go to A&E now if you have:

These can be life-threatening. Do not wait to call the hospital first.

- Sudden severe chest pain or trouble breathing
- Heavy bleeding that won't stop
- Signs of blood clot (painful, swollen leg, chest pain, shortness of breath)
- High temperature (over 38°C) with confusion or unusual drowsiness

AMBER

Contact us now — do not wait — if you have:

- One breast suddenly much larger than the other
- High fever (over 38°C) with severe pain

Office hours (Mon–Fri 9am–5pm): 0131 376 3785

Evenings and weekends during your early recovery: Out-of-Hours Nurse Advice Line 07405322689 — our nurse can advise you, contact your surgeon, or direct you to NHS services.

After your early recovery period: call the hospital in office hours, or NHS 24 on 111.

Had your surgery at Spire Shawfair Park (overnight stay)? Contact Spire directly using the number on your discharge paperwork — not the Waterfront advice line.

GREEN

Tell us at your next appointment:

Anything else that is niggling or worrying you — no concern is too small. Mention it at your next appointment, or call us during office hours.

Related Information Leaflets

Separate leaflets about the procedure itself — not the aftercare instructions above. Tap a title to download, or find them all on your procedure page in the portal.

- Breast Augmentation — BAPRAS Patient Leaflet (https://waterfront-patient-portal.netlify.app/waterfrontaftercare/print_bapras_breast_aug_2021_final_revised_1.pdf)
- Breast Implant Illness — Information (https://waterfront-patient-portal.netlify.app/waterfrontaftercare/bii_information_1.pdf)

How to Use This Information

The advice below is based on Waterfront Private Hospital's written breast augmentation aftercare leaflet. It is general guidance for the average patient and may be adapted by your consultant for your individual circumstances.

Always follow the specific instructions given to you on the day of your surgery and in your printed leaflet. If there is ever a difference, follow your consultant's written or verbal instructions and contact us for clarification.

Post-Operative Checklist

- Use a well-fitting soft support bra as advised by your surgeon
- Sleep in whatever position is comfortable — most patients avoid lying flat on their front for the first few weeks simply because it's uncomfortable
- You can shower from day 1 (unless your surgeon says otherwise) — it's fine if the outer dressings get damp; pat dry gently
- Take prescribed antibiotics as directed
- Attend all scheduled follow-up appointments
- Avoid lifting heavy objects (over 5kg) and strenuous upper body exercise for 6 weeks, or as advised

Wound Care

- Shower from day 1 is fine (unless your surgeon says otherwise) — pat dressings dry gently afterwards
- Change dressings as instructed by your surgeon
- After first week, gently clean incisions with mild soap and water
- From about 4–5 weeks, once wounds are fully healed, start the micropore tape routine: tape worn over the scars and changed weekly. Taping supports the scar and reduces tension on it, which is what drives thick, red scarring — it's one of the best-evidenced things you can do for your scars
- Watch for signs of infection: redness, swelling, discharge, or fever
- Avoid soaking in a bath, pool or hot tub until wounds are fully healed (usually 2–4 weeks)

Pain Management

- Take your painkillers as directed on their labels — every medicine you go home with is labelled with its dose and frequency, and your nurse will go through them with you before you leave. Paracetamol and ibuprofen can safely be taken together
- Take prescribed pain medication as directed
- Some discomfort, tightness, and swelling is normal
- Use cold packs (wrapped in towel) for first 48 hours to reduce swelling
- Swelling typically peaks at 48–72 hours, then gradually decreases
- Wearing supportive bra helps reduce discomfort
- Most pain subsides significantly after first week

Activity Restrictions

- Avoid heavy lifting (roughly anything you can't lift easily with one hand, about 5kg) for the first few weeks, then build up gradually
- No driving for the first week — and only restart once you're off strong painkillers and could comfortably perform an emergency stop (check your insurance policy)
- Light activities and walking are encouraged from day 1
- You can use your arms normally for light tasks from the start; avoid forceful or repetitive overhead activity for the first 2–3 weeks if it pulls or hurts
- Return to work: usually 1–2 weeks for desk jobs, 4–6 weeks for physical work (your surgeon will confirm)
- Gentle walking only for the first 2 weeks, then build up light exercise from about week 4

- Return to full exercise from about week 6, guided by your surgeon

Before You Leave the Hospital

- **Painkillers:** Make sure you have your painkillers before you leave — the nurse looking after you will go through them with you.
- **Follow-up appointments:** You will be given a card with details of your first dressing clinic / follow-up appointment and contact details for the ward if you have any concerns once you get home.
- **Getting home safely:** You must have someone to take you home and a **responsible adult with you for the first night**.

Information on Post-Surgical Bras

A well-fitting bra made of soft fabric can provide support and comfort during the first few months following breast augmentation.

Before your wounds are closed, your surgeon makes sure the implants are a snug fit within the surgically created pockets. In the early months the bra is mainly for **support and comfort** while everything settles.

In the longer term: we use **nanotextured implants**, which remain mobile in their pocket — especially when placed in front of the muscle. For that reason we advise wearing a supportive bra whenever you are upright, even after your recovery. It's absolutely fine to go without for special occasions such as a holiday or a night out.

As a guide: wear your post-surgical bra day and night for the first 3 months, then during the day up to about 6 months — your team will tailor the timings to you.

Your surgeon will advise you on the type of bra to wear and how long you should wear it (for example, day and night for the first few weeks).

Please bring your recommended post-surgical bras with you on the day of surgery so that our nursing team can help you put one on before you are discharged.

Where to buy: Soft, non-wired bras from the high street (M&S, Tesco, ASDA) are fine for comfort. Specialist post-surgical bras: Macom Signature Bra (https://www.macom-medical.com/products/signature-bra), Lipoelastic PI Ideal (https://www.lipoelastic.co.uk/pi-ideal) or Lipoelastic PI Relax (https://www.lipoelastic.co.uk/pi-relax) — use code **QUABA** for a discount.

Your Recovery, Stage by Stage

Days 1–3 — Early Recovery

Immediate post-surgery care and monitoring

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Significant swelling and bruising
- Tightness and discomfort in chest
- Tiredness and need for rest
- Some drainage from incision sites
- Implants may feel high and firm

CARE ROUTINE

- Wear surgical support bra 24/7 as instructed
- Rest with head/torso elevated (2-3 pillows)
- Apply cold compresses to reduce swelling (20 min on, 20 min off)
- Keep dressings clean and dry
- Take prescribed pain medication (including dihydrocodeine if prescribed)
- Light walking only (to bathroom)
- Sleep in whatever position is comfortable

COMFORT

- Take painkillers on schedule (don't wait for pain)
- Paracetamol and ibuprofen as directed
- Use ice packs wrapped in towel (never directly on skin)
- Report uncontrolled pain immediately

Days 4–7 — Improving Daily

Gradual reduction in swelling and discomfort

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Gradual reduction in swelling and bruising
- Discomfort decreasing daily
- Feeling more mobile
- Energy levels gradually improving
- May experience occasional twinges or zaps

CARE ROUTINE

- Continue wearing support bra continuously
- Gentle cleaning of incisions if dressings removed

- Light activities around the house
- Short, gentle walks (5–10 minutes)
- Continue elevation when resting
- Attend first follow-up appointment (usually day 7)
- Avoid lifting arms above shoulder height

COMFORT

- Pain should be significantly reduced
- May reduce to paracetamol/ibuprofen only
- Continue medication as needed
- Less need for strong painkillers

Weeks 2–3 — Increased Activity

Gradual return to light activities

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Noticeable reduction in swelling
- Bruising fading to yellow/green
- Feeling much more like yourself
- Implants starting to settle lower
- Some numbness or tingling may persist

CARE ROUTINE

- Continue support bra as instructed
- Can return to desk work if comfortable
- Gentle stretching of arms (below shoulder height)
- Short walks outside (10–15 minutes)
- Light household tasks (no heavy lifting)
- Begin scar massage if instructed (usually week 2)
- Avoid strenuous activities

COMFORT

- Minimal pain medication needed
- Occasional discomfort with certain movements
- Most discomfort resolved

Weeks 4–6 — Return to Normal

Resuming most daily activities

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Significant improvement in appearance

- Most swelling resolved
- Implants settling into natural position
- Feeling confident with results
- Returning to normal activities

CARE ROUTINE

- Transition to supportive sports bras (after 6 weeks)
- Can resume most normal daily activities
- Light exercise may be permitted (with approval)
- Continue scar care with recommended creams
- Can raise arms fully
- Protect from sun exposure
- Follow-up appointment around week 6

COMFORT

- No pain medication typically needed
- Full range of motion restored
- Occasional mild discomfort possible

Months 2–3 — Final Settling

Implants settling into position

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Implants fully settled into position
- Final shape becoming apparent
- Scars significantly faded
- Feeling completely normal
- Full range of motion

CARE ROUTINE

- Can wear normal supportive bras (avoid underwire for now)
- Full exercise with surgeon approval
- Continue sun protection on scars
- Implants should feel softer and more natural
- Follow-up appointment around month 3

COMFORT

- No pain expected
- Comfortable with all activities
- Full recovery achieved

Month 6 — Final Result

Optimal healing achieved

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Final results visible
- Implants feel natural and soft
- Scars well-healed and faded
- Complete return to all activities
- Confident with appearance

CARE ROUTINE

- Can wear any bra style (including underwire if comfortable)
- All activities permitted
- Regular exercise including upper body
- Continue long-term care as advised
- Annual check-ups as recommended

COMFORT

- No pain expected
- Full recovery achieved
- Contact team if any concerns arise

Follow-Up Appointments

Week 1 (Days 7–10) — First post-operative appointment to check healing, remove dressings (if applicable), and assess early recovery.

- Wound inspection
- Dressing removal (if applicable)
- Assessment of implant position
- Review of care instructions

Further nurse reviews — as needed — Some patients need further nurse reviews. If so, the nurses will arrange these with you and will discharge you from nurse-led care once they are happy your wounds have healed.

Around 6 months — surgeon review (final follow-up) — Your surgeon will usually see you at around 6 months to assess your final result. Your surgeon is always available to review you sooner if required, and in some circumstances may wish to see you before your final follow-up.

Your appointment schedule may vary. Always follow the specific dates and times given in your appointment card. Contact us if you need to reschedule.

Frequently Asked Questions

When can I see my final results?

Initial swelling takes 6–8 weeks to subside. Final results become apparent after 3–6 months as implants settle into position and tissues relax.

Will I have visible scars?

Incisions are made in discreet locations (under breast crease, around areola, or in armpit). Scars fade significantly over 12–18 months with proper care.

When can I wear normal bras?

As a guide: day and night for the first 3 months, then during the day up to about 6 months. These are typical timings rather than strict rules — your team will tailor them to you. Avoid underwired bras for about 3 months or until cleared by your surgeon. Because we use nanotextured implants, which remain mobile in their pocket (especially when placed in front of the muscle), we advise wearing a supportive bra whenever you are upright even after your recovery — it's fine to go without for special occasions such as a holiday or a night out.

Is it normal for implants to feel hard?

Implants may feel firm initially due to swelling and muscle tightness. They will soften over 3–6 months as tissues relax.

When can I sleep on my stomach?

There is no strict rule. Front-sleeping tends to be uncomfortable at first, so most patients naturally avoid it for a few weeks. Once it feels comfortable, it will not harm your implants or your result.

What should I do if one breast looks larger than the other?

Some asymmetry during healing is normal. However, if one breast suddenly becomes significantly larger or if you're concerned, contact us immediately.