WATERFRONT
PRIVATE HOSPITAL

PATIENT INFORMATION · AFTERCARE

Breast Uplift (Mastopexy) Aftercare

General recovery guidance for breast uplift (mastopexy) 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 months for final results · 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 shortness of breath or chest pain
- Leg swelling with breathing problems (possible blood clot)
- Heavy bleeding that won't stop
- High temperature (over 38°C) with confusion or unusual drowsiness

AMBER

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

- Temperature over 38°C with severe pain
- One breast suddenly much larger than the other

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 Uplift — Patient Leaflet (https://waterfront-patient-portal.netlify.app/waterfrontaftercare/breast_uplift_patient_leaflet.pdf)

How to Use This Information

The advice below is based on Waterfront Private Hospital's written breast uplift 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

- Make sure you have your painkillers — the nurse looking after you will go through them with you
- Support bra fitted or information provided
- Follow-up nurse appointment booked (end of week 1)
- Transport home arranged
- Responsible adult staying with you first night
- Emergency contact numbers saved in phone
- Understand wound care instructions

Wound Care

- Shower carefully (it's OK if outer dressings get wet)
- Outer dressings removed at Week 1 nurse appointment

- Paper tape (steri-strips) usually left on
- Remove paper tape by end of week 2 (if stuck, apply Vaseline, wait 30 minutes, then remove)
- Can moisturise scars if wounds dry (Week 5+) with plain moisturiser
- Watch for signs of infection
- Do not soak in bath for 2 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 painkillers regularly as prescribed - don't wait until pain is severe
- Avoid alcohol with painkillers
- One side may hurt more than the other - this is normal
- Swelling typically peaks at 48–72 hours then gradually improves
- Supportive bra helps reduce discomfort

Activity Restrictions

- No heavy lifting for 4 weeks
- No driving for first week or until off strong painkillers and can perform emergency stop comfortably
- Walk regularly from day 1
- Light household activities OK after day 1
- Light physical work: Weeks 2–3
- Gentle exercise: Week 4 (wear support bra)
- Full exercise: Week 6 (build up slowly)
- Swimming: Weeks 4–6 (when wounds fully healed)
- Smoking: Avoid for at least 2 weeks
- Alcohol: Avoid for 3 weeks
- No strenuous exercise for 6 weeks

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.

- **Support Bra:** Your support bra will be fitted before you leave, or information provided on where to purchase one. It should be soft, seamless, with no underwire and adjustable straps.
- **Follow-up appointment:** You will be given a card with details of your first nurse appointment (end of week 1) 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**.

Support Bra Information

A well-fitting support bra is essential for comfort during recovery, especially in the first 3 months.

Must have:

- No underwire
- Front opening (not over-head style)
- Adjustable straps
- Soft, seamless fabric
- **Where to buy:**
- **High Street:** M&S, Tesco, Asda
- **Specialist Online:** Macom Signature Bra (https://www.macom-medical.com/products/signature-bra), Lipoelastic PI Ideal (https://www.lipoelastic.co.uk/pi-ideal), Lipoelastic PI Relax (https://www.lipoelastic.co.uk/pi-relax) (use code QUABA for discount)

Your Painkillers

Every medicine you go home with is clearly labelled with its dose and how often to take it, and your nurse will go through your painkillers with you before you leave.

Take them as directed on the label. Paracetamol and ibuprofen can safely be taken together. If your pain isn't controlled despite taking your painkillers as directed, contact us.

Return to Activities Timeline

- **Driving:** Weeks 1–2 — When off strong painkillers and can do emergency stop
- **Office work:** Week 2 — As comfortable
- **Physical work:** Weeks 2–3 — Start gradually
- **Gentle exercise:** Week 4 — Wear support bra
- **Full exercise:** Week 6 — Build up slowly

- **Swimming:** Weeks 4–6 — When wounds fully healed
- **Flying (short):** 1–2 weeks — Under 3 hours
- **Flying (long):** 2–3 weeks — Wear compression stockings

Do These Things

✓ **Do These Things**

- ✓ Walk regularly from day 1
- ✓ Wear your support bra — day and night for the first ~3 months, then during the day
- ✓ Sleep in any comfortable position
- ✓ Shower (can get dressings wet)
- ✓ Eat healthy foods with fibre
- ✓ Drink plenty of water
- ✓ Keep follow-up appointments
- ✓ Ask questions if worried

Avoid These Things

✗ **Avoid These Things**

- ✗ Smoking for at least 2 weeks
- ✗ Alcohol for 3 weeks
- ✗ Heavy lifting for 4 weeks
- ✗ Underwired bras for 3 months
- ✗ Soaking in bath for 2 weeks
- ✗ Swimming until wounds healed
- ✗ Strenuous exercise for 6 weeks

Scar Care Guide

When to Start: Week 5 (after 1 month) - Only if wounds are completely healed

Your Scar Care Routine

Step 1: Apply Micropore Tape — Use 3M micropore tape from pharmacy

Step 2: Remove and Moisturise — Use plain moisturiser like E45 or Aveeno

Step 3: Repeat — Continue cycle for 4+ months

- Step 1: Leave on for 3–5 days
- Step 1: Can shower with it on
- Step 2: Leave scars exposed 1–2 days
- **Scar Timeline — 3 months:** Scars still pink/red
- **Scar Timeline — 6 months:** Significant fading
- **Scar Timeline — 12 months:** Final appearance

Your Recovery, Stage by Stage

Days 1–3 — Early Recovery

Immediate post-surgery care and monitoring

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Pain and discomfort (often less than expected)
- Swelling and tightness
- Bruising
- Some blood spotting on dressings
- Numbness around nipples
- Mood changes

CARE ROUTINE

- Take painkillers as directed
- Wear your support bra day and night
- Sleep in any comfortable position
- Walk around your home regularly
- Shower carefully (it's OK if outer dressings get wet)

COMFORT

- Take painkillers regularly as prescribed
- Don't wait until pain is severe
- One side may hurt more than the other - this is normal
- Paracetamol and ibuprofen as directed

Days 4–7 — Improving Daily

Gradual reduction in pain and swelling

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Pain decreasing
- More energy
- Swelling starting to reduce
- Feeling more mobile

CARE ROUTINE

- Continue support bra 24/7
- Increase walking
- Light household activities OK
- May drive at end of week 1 if not taking strong painkillers and can do emergency stop comfortably
- Attend Week 1 nurse appointment

COMFORT

- Pain should be significantly reduced
- Most patients stop painkillers by end of week 1
- Continue medication as needed

Week 1 Nurse Appointment — Professional Check-In

Wound assessment and outer dressing removal

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Outer dressings removed
- Wounds checked for healing progress
- Paper tape (steri-strips) usually left on

CARE ROUTINE

- Attend nurse appointment at end of week 1
- Wounds will be professionally assessed
- Ask any questions about care
- Continue regular activity routine

COMFORT

- Pain continuing to improve
- Minimal medication needed

Week 2 — Getting Back to Normal

Return to work and daily activities

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Most patients stop painkillers

- Bruising fading
- Feeling much more like yourself
- Paper tape can be removed by end of week 2

CARE ROUTINE

- Continue support bra
- Remove paper tape by end of week 2 (if stuck, apply Vaseline, wait 30 minutes, then remove)
- Return to work if office-based
- Daily activities feel normal
- Light activities around the house

COMFORT

- Minimal pain medication needed
- Occasional discomfort possible

Weeks 3–4 — Progressive Healing

Most swelling resolves, scar care begins

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Shooting pains (nerves healing - normal)
- 80-90% of swelling gone
- Delayed healing at T-junctions (common)
- Significant improvement in appearance

CARE ROUTINE

- Transition to supportive sports bras (after 6 weeks)
- Can moisturise scars if wounds dry (plain moisturiser like E45, Aveeno)
- Light exercise may be permitted (with approval)
- Can raise arms fully
- Protect from sun exposure
- Contact nurse if delayed healing at T-junctions

COMFORT

- No pain medication typically needed
- Occasional mild discomfort possible

Months 2–3 — Final Settling

Approaching final results

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Scars significantly faded

- Feeling completely normal
- Full range of motion
- Breasts dropping and softening gradually

CARE ROUTINE

- Can wear normal supportive bras (avoid underwire for now)
- Full exercise with surgeon approval
- Continue scar care with micropore tape and moisturiser
- Continue sun protection on scars
- Follow-up appointment around month 3
- Wear support bra during day (3–6 months total)

COMFORT

- No pain expected
- Comfortable with all activities

Month 6 — Final Result

Complete healing and final shape

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Final results visible
- Scars well-healed and faded
- Complete return to all activities
- Confident with appearance
- Breasts in final position

CARE ROUTINE

- Can wear any bra style including underwired bras
- All activities permitted
- Regular exercise including upper body
- Continue long-term scar care as advised
- Wear support bra as comfortable after 6 months

COMFORT

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

Follow-Up Appointments

Week 1 Nurse Appointment — Assessment of healing, outer dressings removed, and answers to questions.

- Outer dressings removed
- Wounds checked
- Questions answered
- Paper tape (steri-strips) usually left on

Further nurse reviews — as needed — You are likely to have further nurse reviews — wound healing after this procedure often benefits from more than one visit. 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

Is it normal for one breast to hurt more?
Yes, this is very common. Each side heals at its own pace and pain levels can vary between the two sides.

When will my breasts look normal?
Most swelling goes by 4 weeks. Final shape takes 6 months. They will drop and soften gradually. Most swelling is gone within the first 3–4 weeks.

Can I sleep on my side?
Yes, sleep however is comfortable from day one. There are no restrictions on sleeping position.

What are shooting pains?
These are nerves reconnecting - completely normal and a good sign of healing. They typically occur around weeks 3–4 and are a positive indicator of recovery.

When can I go braless?
Short periods after 3 months. 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.

Is delayed healing serious?

Usually not. It's common at T-junctions (where incisions meet). Contact your nurse for different dressings if needed. Most delayed areas catch up with time.

When can I return to work?

Office-based work: Week 2. Physical work: Weeks 2–3, starting gradually. Your surgeon will confirm the timeline for your specific situation.

How long should I wear the support bra?

First 3 months: Day and night. 3–6 months: During the day. After 6 months: As comfortable. Look for soft, seamless, no underwire styles.

What should I do about scars?

Week 5+: Start scar care with micropore tape (3–5 days) followed by moisturiser. Repeat for 4+ months. Scars continue fading over 12 months.

When can I drive?

Weeks 1–2 is safe when you're off strong painkillers and can comfortably perform an emergency stop. Check with your insurance company about your coverage.