WATERFRONT
PRIVATE HOSPITAL

PATIENT INFORMATION · AFTERCARE

Breast Uplift with Implants Aftercare

General recovery guidance for breast uplift with 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 months to final result · 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 (signs of 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:

- High fever over 38°C
- One breast suddenly much larger than the other
- Severe implant pain or sudden change in shape

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.

How to Use This Information

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

Emergency Contacts: NHS Emergency: 999 | NHS 24: 111 | Hospital: 0131 376 3785 | Out-of-hours: 07405322689

Post-Operative Checklist

- Bring recommended post-surgical bras to hospital so nursing staff can fit you before discharge
- Painkillers provided (including dihydrocodeine if needed) - take exactly as directed
- Support bra properly fitted before leaving hospital
- Follow-up nurse appointment booked for end of week 1
- Transport home arranged with responsible adult for first night
- Emergency contact numbers saved to your phone
- Wound care instructions understood
- Implant care requirements understood

Wound Care

- Keep initial dressings dry for first 48 hours or as advised
- Change dressings as instructed by nursing team
- Outer dressings can get wet when showering
- At week 1 appointment: outer dressings removed, paper tape left on
- Remove paper tape by end of week 2 (use Vaseline if stuck)
- Once fully healed: gently clean incisions with mild soap and water
- Begin scar care from week 5 onwards if wounds completely healed

- Avoid baths, pools, and hot tubs for at least 2 weeks
- Watch for signs of infection: redness, warmth, swelling, discharge, fever

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 severe
- Days 1–3: expect pain, swelling, and tightness
- Swelling typically peaks at 48–72 hours then gradually improves
- Support bra helps reduce discomfort
- Most pain subsides significantly after first week

Activity Restrictions

- Days 1–3: Rest at home, light walking only
- Week 1: Can return to very light activity, no driving first week or until off strong painkillers and can do emergency stop
- Week 2: Can return to office work, light household tasks
- Weeks 3–4: Can do gentle exercise and light activity
- Week 4 onwards: Gentle exercise permitted with surgeon approval
- Week 6: Full exercise with surgeon approval
- No heavy lifting over 5kg for 6 weeks
- No underwired bras for 3 months
- Avoid smoking for 2+ weeks, alcohol for 3 weeks
- No swimming until fully healed (4–6 weeks)
- No strenuous exercise for 6 weeks
- Flying short haul: 1–2 weeks, long haul: 2–3 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.

- **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**.
- **Support bra:** Our nursing team will help you put on your post-surgical support bra before you leave.

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 uplift with implants.

Before your wounds are closed, your surgeon makes sure the implants are a snug fit within the surgically created pockets. The bra is therefore **not needed to maintain implant position**; it is mainly for **support and comfort**.

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.

Implant-Specific Information

Implant Settling Timeline

Weeks 1–2: Firm and high in position

Weeks 3–4: Starting to soften as swelling reduces

Months 2–3: Dropping into final position and softening considerably

Month 6: Final position and shape achieved, feeling natural and soft

What's Normal During Implant Settling

- ✓ 'Square' or boxy shape initially - takes time to settle
- ✓ Implants sitting high - they gradually drop into position
- ✓ Very firm feeling - softens as healing progresses
- ✓ Different settling speeds - each side heals independently
- ✓ Asymmetry during healing - usually resolves by month 3
- **Implant Care**

- Wear a support bra as recommended. 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. 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 — going without for special occasions such as a holiday or a night out is fine.
- Avoid any trauma or heavy impact to the chest
- Report any sudden changes in implant appearance or feel immediately
- Inform any future healthcare providers that you have implants
- Annual check-ups recommended after the first year

Support Bra Guide

Ideal Support Bra Features

- No underwire
- Front opening for easy on/off (especially first weeks)
- Adjustable straps for proper fit
- Soft, seamless fabric for comfort
- Extra support below cup to minimize movement
- Correct band size - not too tight or loose
- **Where to Buy Support Bras** — Soft, post-surgical support bras are available from major retailers:
- M&S
- Tesco
- Asda
- 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)
- **Discount code:** Use code QUABA for a discount on specialist bras.
- **Support Bra Wear Timeline — First 3 months:** Day and night continuously
- **Support Bra Wear Timeline — Months 3–6:** During the day only
- **Support Bra Wear Timeline — After 6 months:** As comfortable - may transition to regular supportive bras

Medication Guide

Always take medications exactly as prescribed. If you have any questions or concerns about your medications, contact the hospital or your GP.

Laxatives — Take if constipated (painkillers can cause constipation) — Follow package instructions

Antibiotics — Take all prescribed antibiotics as directed — Complete the full course even if you feel better

Important Safety Information

- Avoid alcohol with painkillers - it increases side effects and drowsiness
- Do not mix medications without checking with your pharmacist
- If constipated from painkillers, increase fibre and water intake

Scar Care Guide

Proper scar care can significantly improve the appearance of surgical scars. Start scar care once your wounds are completely healed, usually from week 5 onwards.

Micropore Tape Method (Recommended)

- 1. Apply 3M Micropore tape directly over scar
- 2. Leave on for 3–5 days continuously
- 3. Can shower with tape on
- 4. After 3–5 days: remove tape and moisturise scar
- 5. Leave scar exposed for 1–2 days
- 6. Repeat cycle for 4+ months
- **Recommended Moisturisers for Scars:** ✓ E45, ✓ Aveeno, ✓ Bio-Oil
- **Scar Appearance Timeline — 3 months:** Still pink or red in colour
- **Scar Appearance Timeline — 6 months:** Significant fading of pink/red colour
- **Scar Appearance Timeline — 12 months:** Final appearance achieved - pale and much less visible
- **Scar Care Tips:** Protect scars from sun exposure (wear clothing or sunscreen)
- Keep scars moisturised regularly
- Avoid irritants if you develop sensitivity to tape
- Stop using tape if redness or irritation develops
- Be patient - scars continue to improve for up to 18 months

Lifestyle Guidelines

Things to DO

- ✓ Walk regularly from day 1 (helps circulation)
- ✓ Wear support bra 3–6 months as instructed
- ✓ Sleep in any comfortable position (side or back)
- ✓ Shower normally - outer dressings can get wet
- ✓ Eat healthy with plenty of fibre
- ✓ Drink plenty of water
- ✓ Keep all follow-up appointments
- **Things to AVOID**
- ✗ Smoking for 2+ weeks
- ✗ Alcohol for 3 weeks
- ✗ Heavy lifting for 6 weeks (anything over 5kg)
- ✗ Underwired bras for 3 months
- ✗ Baths for 2 weeks
- ✗ Swimming until fully healed (4–6 weeks)
- ✗ Strenuous exercise for 6 weeks

Your Recovery, Stage by Stage

Days 1–3 — Early Recovery

Immediate post-surgery care and pain management

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Pain and discomfort (often less than expected)
- Significant swelling and extreme tightness from implants
- Bruising and blood spotting on dressings
- Numbness around nipples
- Mood changes from anaesthesia
- Breasts may look 'square' or sit higher than final position

CARE ROUTINE

- Take painkillers regularly as prescribed - don't wait until severe
- Wear support bra day and night as instructed
- Sleep in any comfortable position
- Walk around home to maintain circulation

- Shower carefully - outer dressings can get wet
- Take prescribed antibiotics if given

COMFORT

- Take painkillers on schedule, don't wait for pain to become severe
- Paracetamol and ibuprofen as directed
- One side may hurt more - this is normal
- Report uncontrolled pain immediately

Days 4–7 — Improving Daily

Gradual reduction in swelling and discomfort

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Pain decreasing noticeably
- More energy and mobility returning
- Swelling starting to reduce
- Implants beginning to soften slightly
- Feeling more like yourself

CARE ROUTINE

- Continue wearing support bra 24/7
- Increase walking gradually for circulation
- Light household activities are OK
- May drive at end of week 1 if not taking strong painkillers and can do emergency stop
- Attend first nurse appointment (end of week 1)

COMFORT

- Pain decreasing significantly
- May reduce to standard painkillers only
- Continue medication as needed
- Less need for strong painkillers

Week 1 Nurse Appointment — First Check-Up

Professional wound assessment and dressing removal

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Outer dressings being removed for inspection
- Wounds checked for healing progress
- Implant position assessed by nurse
- Paper tape (steri-strips) will be left on

CARE ROUTINE

- Have outer dressings removed by nurse
- Keep paper tape on as instructed
- Continue support bra without interruption
- Follow post-appointment wound care instructions

COMFORT

- Pain usually well controlled at this stage
- Continue medication as needed

Week 2 — Continuing Recovery

Increased comfort and activity

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Some patients stop painkillers completely
- Bruising fading to yellow/green
- Can return to office work
- Implants starting to feel softer and less tight

CARE ROUTINE

- Remove paper tape by end of week 2 (use Vaseline if stuck)
- Continue support bra 24/7
- Can return to office/desk work
- Gentle movement and light activities fine

COMFORT

- Minimal pain medication needed
- Most discomfort resolved

Weeks 3–4 — Major Improvement

Significant healing progress

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Shooting pains (nerves healing - this is good)
- 80-90% of swelling gone
- Implants continuing to settle into position
- Watch for delayed healing at T-junctions

CARE ROUTINE

- Can moisturise scars if wounds completely healed
- Start scar care routine (Week 5 onwards)
- Continue support bra during day

- Increase daily activities gradually

COMFORT

- Shooting pains are normal (nerve recovery)
- Very little pain medication needed

Weeks 5–6 — Near Normal

Return to most activities

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Feeling nearly normal
- Can begin gentle exercise
- Implants settling nicely
- Scars beginning to fade

CARE ROUTINE

- Begin scar care with micropore tape (if fully healed)
- Support bra during day, can go without at night if comfortable
- Gentle exercise like walking or light stretching
- Continue sun protection on scars

COMFORT

- No pain expected
- Fully functional

Month 6 — Final Settlement

Implants fully settled, final shape achieved

WHAT'S NORMAL

- Final breast shape and position achieved
- Implants fully settled and feeling natural
- Scars well-faded
- Complete return to all activities

CARE ROUTINE

- Can wear any bra style (including underwired)
- All exercise permitted including upper body
- Full normal activities
- Continue annual check-ups as recommended

COMFORT

- No pain expected

- Full recovery achieved

Follow-Up Appointments

Week 1 (Days 7–10) - Nurse Appointment — First post-operative appointment to check healing and remove outer dressings.

- Outer dressings removed for inspection
- Wounds checked for healing progress
- Implant position assessed
- Paper tape (steri-strips) left on
- Wound care instructions reviewed

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

Why do my implants look square and sit high?

This is completely normal. When first placed, implants may look 'square' and sit higher than their final position. They take 3–6 months to drop into their final position as swelling reduces and tissues relax.

Is it normal for one breast to hurt more or look different?

Yes, absolutely. Each side of your body heals at its own pace. One breast may be more swollen, bruised, or uncomfortable than the other initially, but this typically evens out over several weeks.

When will my breasts feel soft and natural?

Most softening occurs by 3 months as the implants settle and tissues relax. Final softness and natural feel is achieved by 6 months.

Can I sleep on my side from day one?

Yes — sleep in whatever position is comfortable from day one. Most patients find lying on their front uncomfortable for the first few weeks and naturally avoid it; once it feels comfortable, it will not harm your result.

What are shooting pains?

Shooting or 'zapping' pains are a sign that your nerves are reconnecting and healing. This is a positive sign and usually occurs during weeks 3–4. These pains typically resolve within a few weeks.

When can I go braless?

You can have short braless periods after 3 months. After 6 months, when implants are fully settled and tissue has healed, you can go completely braless if desired.

Will implants affect future mammograms?

Yes, implants can interfere with standard mammograms. Always inform your radiographer that you have implants. They may need special imaging techniques to see breast tissue clearly.