

[www.sskplasticsurgery.com/breast/breastrecovery](http://www.sskplasticsurgery.com/breast/breastrecovery)

*"I watch her breasts gently rise, gently fall."*

-- Simon and Garfunkel

Your breasts are unique to you and important to your femininity--to feeling complete, physically attractive, and confident. Whether you are considering undergoing or have already scheduled aesthetic breast surgery, at SSK Plastic Surgery, the staff and I are honored to serve your cosmetic surgery needs with the finest attention, technique, and follow-up care. Please read and later refer to the following information.

## **YOUR TAILORED PROCEDURE AND RECOVERY**

### **Anesthesia:**

Your surgery will most likely be under general anesthesia (usually also with a local anesthetic to maximize pain control) or perhaps via intravenous sedation. Our anesthesia team also administers IV Tylenol from the moment your surgery is about to begin in order to minimize pain and inflammation. During the procedure, we do everything we can to minimize bruising and swelling with gentle tissue handling, meticulous hemostasis, good blood pressure control, and a combination of many other proven strategies so that you can be presentable and back to your normal activities ASAP. Most of our patients are prescribed a patch to wear starting the night before surgery to help prevent post-operative nausea. Our anesthesiologists are all board certified to provide you the finest care possible.

### **After Surgery, in the Recovery Unit:**

When you are fully awake, our staff will review with you again your post-operative care instructions that we discussed prior to surgery. We use simple, light dressings that are easy to take care of and comfortable support garments that will keep your breasts positioned symmetrically during the early stage of healing while also controlling swelling and preventing an accumulation of fluid. Instructions will include which bras you can and cannot wear and the duration of restrictions, other details about your postsurgical care, normal symptoms you will experience, and potential signs of complication to watch for. When you are well enough for your driver to take you home, we intend you to have little to worry about so that you can start to enjoy the optimized results to your breasts while you recover.

*Outpatient:* Most breast procedures are outpatient. We will send you home with your designated driver. You must have someone stay with you, especially overnight, because the anesthetic can affect you for the next 24 hours. Either I or a member of our staff will call later to check on you.

*Inpatient:* Depending on co-morbidities, distance from the hospital, the extent of the procedure, and whether you are experiencing any unusual reactions, you may need a 23-hour hospital stay.

If necessary, you will be admitted and cared for in a room after surgery. I will visit you the next day. At release time, your driver will take you home, where help awaits you.

### **Help/Support at Home:**

**It is important to keep your arrangement of having someone to stay with you in order to help with your care and with your family's needs for at least a few days and maybe up to a week, depending on the extent of your surgery and your situation at home.** If the arrangement you scheduled falls through, call us right away; we can arrange for a private-duty nurse or a trained companion to care for you at your expense. Having help is crucial to your recovery! Either I or a member of our staff will call later to check on you.

### **Medications:**

Oral pain relievers should keep you comfortable. But, if you experience extreme or long-lasting pain, allergic reactions, or other unusual symptoms, call us without delay. If I prescribe an oral antibiotic for you, be sure to take it as prescribed and for the full period.

### **Sleep/Rest:**

You should sleep on your back. Your head and back should remain inclined (25-45 degrees) on a wedge pillow, in a recliner chair, or on a pile of pillows for at least the first few post-operative days to reduce swelling in the chest area.

### **Showering vs. Bathing:**

You will be allowed to shower within 48 hours and even get your incisions wet, but I prefer that my patients not submerge their incisions in water (such as in a bathtub, pool, hot tub, or ocean) for 3-4 weeks while their wounds are healing.

### **Clothing:**

Besides wearing the special support garments we provided, you should continue to dress as you did on your surgery day: soft, loose, comfortable clothing that goes on and comes off easily: tops and sweaters that open in the front, probably roomy elastic-waist pants, and slip-on shoes--so that you won't have to bend over or to excessively activate your arms and chest muscles.

### **Beverages & Foods:**

Please stay hydrated, preferably with water, before and after surgery for a safe recovery. Limit alcoholic beverages to no more than 2-3 weekly. You should have prepared for your post-surgical recovery by buying lots of bottled water if you need it, along with low-sodium/caffeine-free/high-protein beverages and foods, and fresh fruits and veggies.

### **Activities:**

From the day of surgery onward, you should rest most of the time but also do some moving around/walking; start with light walking and work up to a moderate level after the first week as your recovery continues. You may do light activities in 7-10 days. This is a good time to catch up on reading (newspapers, magazines, books) and to watch movies and TV shows. **DO NOT** try to take care of someone else; this is your time for someone to take care of you.

**Strenuous Activities: Reaching, Lifting, Pushing, Pulling, Exercising, Sports:** I must restrict you for up to 4 weeks to avoid strenuous activities that activate your chest, mainly the pectoralis major muscle: You will soon discover that as you begin to heal, your arms will have a limited range of motion, so store all the supplies you will need, especially during the first week, where you can easily reach them (at counter level when you are standing and at coffee-table/side-table level when you are resting). If possible, have a speakerphone closeby and remote controls for the TV and other electronics. Do NOT try to bend over or to reach far across, high, or low. **Do not lift, push, or pull anything over 10 pounds, including your young children, for 3-4 weeks.** After that, you may ease back into most of your typical daily and workout activities.

**Driving:** Do NOT drive until at least after the first week, when I will examine you and determine your progress and readiness. I do not allow driving if you are still taking narcotic medications or if you are too slow to react appropriately while driving.

**Laundry, Cleaning:** Do NOT do laundry or cleaning for the first 2 weeks.

**Return to Job:** You may be able to return to work in a few days to a week, depending on the physical demands of your job, your recovery progress, and your comfort level. You likely may resume most regular activities by the end of 2 weeks.

#### **Follow-Up:**

We schedule to see you back no later than 1 week after surgery for your first follow-up appointment in my Newport Beach plastic surgery office. We will remove your light dressing and continue to monitor your progress, symptoms, sutures as they dissolve over time, and associated overall health at regular intervals to make sure your healing is going as planned.

Be gentle with your breasts and your self-care for the next several weeks and months as you recover and your implants settle into their intended final position.

#### **PROCEDURAL-SPECIFIC RECOVERY INFORMATION:**

**Breast Augmentation/Revision:** If we have just put in implants, the amount and duration of any discomfort that you experience will depend chiefly on their size and where we placed them.

**Breast Reduction:** You should notice the weight off your shoulders, improved contour and shape to your breasts, and an enhanced lifestyle of participating in activities with less discomfort.

**Breast Reconstruction:** Your personalized reconstructive plan will determine your post-operative recovery time, anticipated length of hospital stay (if needed), your activity restrictions, etc. We will maximize your postop comfort by combining oral pain medications and muscle relaxers; they have different functions and may work synergistically when combined.

**Drains:** In general, with our advanced techniques, most of our surgeries do not utilize drains. However, there are certain situations where they may be beneficial. We ask that you empty and record your drains twice daily and to bring your log book measuring your outputs to your appointments. When needed, drains usually stay between 7-20 days. Also, if you have drains, make sure to always have some slack on the tubing and to secure the bulbs to your clothing so that they do not fall straight down and get pulled out

due to gravity. When showering, you may secure your drains to an old necklace (or even Mardi Gras beads) to help free up your hands.

### **GENERAL ADDITIONAL RECOVERY INFORMATION:**

#### **Pain, Soreness, Numbness, Stiffness:**

Very-minor procedures (surgical or nonsurgical) normally produce little, if any, discomfort in general and at the site. We often control pain easily with oral medications in the first week. Some patients report no or minimal discomfort. You can expect numbness or tingling around your incisions that should decrease and may or may not resolve, depending on your pre-surgical level of sensitivity and what procedure you've had done. Deep pressure sensation recovers more easily than fine-point discrimination. Minor stiffness at the site can be normal for a few days to a few weeks.

#### **Swelling, Bruising, Redness, Seepage:**

Through meticulous technique and gentle tissue handling, our goal has been to create minimal, if any, bruising, swelling, and discomfort. Certain other factors determine how much bruising takes place, such as the complexity or amount of surgery, the surgical sites (areas with thinner skin bruise more easily than thick areas), and your genetics (if you bruise more easily than your friends, you might bruise more than they do with surgery). Inflammation and swelling is normal in healing and varies in duration, depending on your procedure(s). On average, for most procedures that we perform, patients are presentable from a few days to about two weeks. A little redness around your incision can be normal during the first week.

#### **Sutures/Incisions, Scarring:**

Most of your sutures are dissolvable and working on the inside, helping to support your closure over 2-6 months; to seal the skin edges we use either skin glue or ster-strips (fine skin tape applied over incisions), which usually fall off on their own. Most plastic surgery closures are designed to be tension free and to prevent unsightly scars that widen by performing layered closures. These are normally placed into natural skin folds and creases, or in other locations where they are best concealed. Avoid scratching your incisions, especially if they itch. The deeper-layer sutures that I use do not need to be taken out because they are absorbable and support your wound for 2-6 months, during the most-critical phases of wound remodeling. External sutures, if utilized are usually removed within 5 days on the face and by 10-14 days on the body. Don't be unduly concerned about scarring; it usually fades over time for up to 2 years. We also offer medical grade silicone based scar control therapies for those seeking maximum protection.

#### **When to Call Us:**

Call us without delay if you see increased redness, seepage/pus, or if you have allergic reactions or other unusual symptoms, especially with intense and long-lasting pain.

#### **Recovery Time:**

Patience is key with recovery. Patients have different procedures and different healing processes, so recovery times will vary. The extent and complexity of your procedure will

correlate with your recovery time. After the procedure, we will again discuss with you, and your loved one or friend, the specific do's and don'ts for your ideal recovery. You shouldn't expect that you will bounce back right away after undergoing a cosmetic breast procedure.

**Other Medical Procedures:** After your breast surgery, if you have implants, I prefer that you not have any dental work done for at least 6 months, unless it is absolutely necessary, in order to avoid the possible travel of bacteria from your mouth to your surgical site.

I would be honored to have earned your trust and your approval in compassionate, skilled care-- before, during, and after the best breast surgery Orange County has to offer. Please enjoy your natural-looking improved shape, your more-proportionate appearance in your clothes, and feeling complete and more confident. As your Orange County plastic surgeon, my goals are always to place your safety, satisfaction, and care as my top priority to help in rendering a better quality of life for you. If you have had a breast procedure as part of a mommy makeover, you are recharging your overall appearance.

**After You Recover:**

To maximize your safety and your attractive, healthy outcome, please remember to follow through on prescribed periodic evaluations with me. Also, call and come in if you notice unexpected changes or pain. Remember: You're a member of our extended family of patients and welcome with us after your procedure whether just to say hi or to have questions answered.