Lipofilling

We expect you to make a rapid recovery after your operation and to experience no serious problems. However, it is important that you should know about minor problems, which are common after this operation, and also about more serious problems that can occasionally occur. The section “What problems can occur after the operation?” describes these, and we would particularly ask you to read this. The headings from this section will also be included in the consent form you will be asked to sign before your operation.

What is Lipofilling/modeling

Lipofilling/modeling is a surgical procedure used to correct contour defects within the breast and replace breast volume which may have been lost following previous surgery.

What does having Lipofilling involve?

Lipofilling is performed in the operating theatre under general anesthetic. It involves moving fat from a donor site on another part of your body, usually your thighs, buttock or tummy. Your surgeon will assess you and discuss with you where it is best to harvest fat from. The fat will then be collect from the donor site; it will be refined and then transferred it into the breast.

How long will I need to stay in hospital?

Lipofilling is usually done as a day case procedure but you may need to stay one night in hospital.

What happens after the operation?

You may need to have more than one procedure of lipofilling. The volume increases by building layers of the fat. You may not see any or much difference in your breast defect or breast volume after the first episode. Additional repeat procedures may be required if the volume deficit is not adequately corrected.

Discharge from hospital

To enable you to go home after a day care procedure you MUST have a responsible adult with you OVER NIGHT and for the following day (24hrs post operatively).

You will need to wear a non-wired supportive bra for 4-6 weeks after the procedure to help support the breast.

You will need to take it easy for the first 3-4 days after the procedure but generally after that you can return to normal activities. You should not drive unless you can do an emergency stop comfortably and swerve the car if necessary.

You will have shower proof dressings on the breast which can be removed 7 days after the procedure.

What problems can occur after the operation?

Wound problems

Bruising may be noted around the donor site of the lipofilling and can last for several weeks.

Swelling may take several weeks to settle fully from both the donor site and within the breast. Once the swelling has settled you may find that there are contour irregularities from the donor site.
Some of the injected fat may not survive and can die. This is called fat necrosis. This can present as a lump/lumpiness or indentation within the breast. This is not harmful but will need to be assessed by your surgeon.

**Infection**

Infection is uncommon but could occur at the donor site or within the breast. Signs of infection are redness, swelling, increase in your temperature or increased pain within either site. If you experience any of these then contact your GP straight away and a course of antibiotics can be prescribed if appropriate.

**Deep vein thrombosis (DVT)**

Deep vein thrombosis is a possible problem, but is uncommon. If you are at particular risk then special precautions will be taken to reduce the risk. Moving your legs and feet as soon as you can after the operation and walking about early, all help to stop thrombosis occurring.

**Sensation**

Numbness may occur in both the donor site and the breast due to nerve damage during the procedure. This is usually temporary but in some cases may be permanent.

**Pain**

You may get pain for either the donor site or within the breast. Simple painkillers may be needed for a few days following the procedure.

**Mammograms**

Having lipofilling can introduce calcification changes within the breast. This may make mammograms more difficult to interpretate. If this is the case, you will need to let the radiographer doing your mammogram know that you have had lipofilling done. You may be recalled for another mammogram.

**The risks of a general anaesthetic**

General anaesthetics have some risks, which may be increased if you have chronic medical conditions, but in general they are as follows:

- **Common temporary side effects** (risk of 1 in 10 to 1 in 100) include bruising or pain in the area of injections, blurred vision and sickness, these can usually be treated and pass off quickly.

- **Infrequent complications** (risk of 1 in 100 to 1 in 10,000) include temporary breathing difficulties, muscle pains, headaches, damage to teeth, lip or tongue, sore throat and temporary problems with speaking.

- **Extremely rare and serious complications** (risk of less than 1 in 10,000). These include severe allergic reactions and death, brain damage, kidney and liver failure, lung damage, permanent nerve or blood vessel damage, eye injury, and damage to the voice box. These are very rare and may depend on whether you have other serious medical conditions.

**What should you do if you develop problems?**

Please contact one of the breast reconstruction nurse specialists, Katherine Bonnin or Sue Avery on 01392 402707, Monday-Friday 8:30-16:30 if you have any further questions.

**Do you need to return to hospital for a check?**

Your consultant will usually see you for a post-operative checkup 2-4 week after the procedure. At this stage, they will assess the breast and decide if you would benefit from another lipofilling procedure.