



PERK UP!

Pregnancy, weight loss and aging can get the 'girls' down, but breast lift surgery can restore their joie de vivre

Words Rochelle Nataloni
Photography Tommy Chung

Some women think their breasts are too small and others think theirs are too big. The rest of us are endowed with breasts that are, as Goldilocks would say, "just right." Unfortunately, whether you're talking about porridge or breasts, time takes its toll: just as perfect porridge eventually gets cold and lumpy, those perfect breasts can lose their shape and oomph.

While a push-up bra can work wonders under a sweater or tee, women who want to defy gravity even in the buff often opt for something more permanent. Mastopexy, also known as breast lift surgery, is the solution for women who are happy with the way they fill their cups, but want the structural support that only surgery—or genetics—can supply.

A common misconception is that droopy breasts are always the result of aging. It's true that as women age, their breasts lose firmness, and the skin gradually loses its elasticity so it cannot hold the breasts in a youthful, upright position. However, pregnancy, breast feeding, and significant weight fluctuations also deplete the skin's elasticity and detract from the breast's once-perky appearance.

As for the procedure itself, typically, an incision is made around the nipple-areola and vertically along the underside of the breasts. After the incisions are made, the saggy, stretched skin is removed, the nipple/areola is lifted and dissolvable stitches are placed to hold the breast in its new upright position.

'Girl' Power

In 26-year-old Jessica Fry's case, breast lift surgery came to the rescue following a weight loss that left her with breasts that didn't suit her otherwise fit and youthful physique. A Philadelphia radio disc jockey, Jessica is a local celebrity whose vibrant on-air personality has won her a growing fan base. When she hosts a station-sponsored public event, her fans expect to see someone as effervescent as the voice they've come to love, so giving the 'girls' a little pick-me-up made personal and professional sense. "I had lost some weight that I had put on in college, and I wanted to be perkier again," explains Jessica, who considered the breast lift for a little over a year before deciding to move forward with the procedure.

FYI: If you have 5 or 10 lbs to lose and are thinking of having a breast lift: Go for it. If you are working on losing 10% or more of your body weight: Hold off until you reach your goal.

Jessica opted to have the surgery performed by Ted Eisenberg, DO, FACOS, FAACS, a cosmetic surgeon whose name is synonymous with aesthetic breast surgery in Philadelphia and the surrounding Delaware Valley. Dr. Eisenberg's entire practice is dedicated to cosmetic breast surgery; he's performed 4,000 breast surgeries including lifts, augmentations and a combination of the two. Because he focuses exclusively on breasts, he's developed improvements to the conventional breast lift procedure, and these advances are now a basic part of his technique. Dr. Eisenberg's innovation, which he calls, "previsualization," relies on the use of surgical staples to temporarily fasten the breasts into their new higher position, enabling him to see exactly how the breasts will look before he makes a single incision. The technique personifies the adage, "measure twice, cut once."

"It takes all the worry and sweat out of the surgery for the surgeon, and offers significant benefits for the patient, as well," says Dr. Eisenberg. "It cuts down on anesthesia time because we don't have to go back and forth readjusting the amount of tissue that needs to be removed and it creates the maximum amount of symmetry in the shortest period of time."

Critical Consultation

Stellar surgical technique is necessary for a successful outcome, but Dr. Eisenberg points out that the consultation is perhaps equally critical. He stresses that women who are considering breast lift surgery need to work with a physician that is going to listen to them and fully grasp their expectations. "I always ask the patients who request breast lifts to tell me how they feel when they look at themselves in the mirror in their bra. If they say they like the way they fill their bra then a lift is the right procedure, but if they say that they wish there was a little more there then we can add an implant and do a combination lift/augmentation," he explains.

Breast lift surgery may be for you if:
 You have sagging breasts
 You want to improve the shape of your breasts
 You are healthy and free of breast disease
 You can tolerate breast scars

It's during this consultation that Dr. Eisenberg explains that significant weight gain and/or pregnancy are the two things that can affect the newly lifted breasts and cause them to droop again.

"Dr. Eisenberg told me that many women who are planning to have children sooner as opposed to later wait to have breast lift surgery until after giving birth. Since I am a long way off from that stage of my life, I decided to get it done now and enjoy the results. I may decide to get another lift after I start a family," Jessica says.

Women who consider this procedure often fear the loss of nipple sensation or the inability to breast feed in the future, and scarring is a concern, as well. Jessica says that her surgeon explained that while not all women are automatically capable of breast feeding, the surgery may not impact their ability one way or the other. As far as sensation, Jessica says, "I have pretty much all sensation, especially in the 'important areas,' of my breasts, that I had before."

She says she will always have tell-tale signs of the surgery, but that the scarring is minimal. "I was informed that there would be a degree of scarring and that it varies from person to person depending on how their skin heals. I'll always have some signs of the breast lift when naked but, for me, it's minimal and worth it considering the great results."



The most common reasons for droopy breasts are having children and weight change, but this woman had neither; she just developed this way. Dr. Eisenberg used the Staple-First 'previsualization' lift technique on this patient. Before and after courtesy of: Dr. Ted Eisenberg



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