



Praxis für Plastische Chirurgie

Dr. med. Britta von Stumberg

FAQs for consultations – Frequently asked questions on mastectomies

1. Before my mastectomy: what will I need in order to submit my health insurance claim?

To apply for reimbursement, bring your psychologist/psychiatrist's referral to your consultation, or send it in afterward.

2. What other preparations will I need to make, and/or what other prerequisites should I be aware of?

We'll go over all the important details together at your individual consultation. Most people do not need to take any special preparatory measures, nor is it necessary for you to undergo hormone therapy prior to your operation.

3. Will I need to discontinue testosterone therapy before my mastectomy?

No, that won't be necessary.

4. I use testosterone gel. Should I avoid using it on any specific areas before my operation?

Testosterone gel will not affect the procedure. You can continue applying it as usual.

5. Which hospital will my mastectomy be performed at?

We work with two hospitals. The operation will be performed either at the Zuger Kantonsspital in Baar or at the Limmatklinik in Zurich.

6. Will I need to shave before the operation?

No, our surgical team will shave and disinfect the area immediately before the operation.

7. What kind of anesthesia will be used?

Mastectomies are performed under total anesthesia. Your anesthesiologist will give you a complete explanation of the process before your operation.

8. How long will I be in surgery?

On average, the procedure takes two and a half to three hours, depending primarily on the size of your breasts and the surgical technique being used.

9. What type of incision will you be making?

We generally use a periareolar incision (around the areola) on smaller breasts; with larger breasts, we make a larger incision in order to remove the patient's mammary glands.

10. Will my nipples be altered as part of the mastectomy?

In most cases, yes. We use a precise template to reduce patients' areola size to around 2.5 – 2.8 cm, and shift their nipples into a natural position on the chest.

11. Is there a risk of losing circulation in my nipples following the operation?

The risk of complications can never be ruled out entirely, but nipples/areolas have a very good recovery prognosis in general—around 95 to 100 percent, in fact.

12. Will I still have feeling in my nipples after the operation?

Some patients report decreased chest and nipple sensitivity immediately following their mastectomies. Most patients recover full sensation within six months, but it can occasionally take up to two years. Permanent loss of sensitivity is very rare.

13. When will I need to arrive at the hospital?

You can either check into the hospital the day before the mastectomy or arrive two hours before the procedure. Make sure not to eat or drink anything in the hours leading up to the operation.

14. Are you going to insert a catheter/drainage tube into my chest?

Catheters are not necessary for mastectomies. In most cases, we insert two small drainage tubes after the procedure to help discharge flow out of the wound. The tubes will be shortened after two days, and then removed on the third day following your surgery.

15. How long will I be in the hospital?

Most patients are able to leave the hospital after two to three days.

16. When will my stitches be taken out?

Some of the suture material will dissolve on its own, so it will not need to be removed. The rest will be taken out after seven to ten days.

17. Will my chest be bandaged afterward?

Yes. Immediately after your mastectomy, we will apply a soft, protective dressing to the treatment area, which I will change for you during my rounds. After two to three days, we will swap the dressing for a special compression vest.

18. How long will I need to wear the compression vest for?

You should wear the compression vest day and night for four to six weeks following the operation.

19. What kind of follow-up care will I receive?

Your follow-up appointments will be at my clinic in Zurich. We will have you come in for a checkup every two to three days or so.

20. When will I be able to start showering again?

You can start taking short showers around three days after the procedure, using special waterproof bandages.

21. Can I use deodorant immediately following the procedure?

Yes, you can—deodorant won't be a problem. Just make sure not to spray it directly onto the operated area.

22. How long will I need to wait before I start physical activity again?

Early mobilization can be beneficial to the healing process, so you are welcome to start going on short walks immediately following the procedure. However, you should avoid doing high-intensity sports for the first six weeks or so.

23. Will I need to protect my chest from the sun?

Exposure to direct sunlight or UV radiation (tanning beds) can cause surgical scars to darken, so we recommend not tanning or exposing the treatment area to sun while the scars are still active (red/pink).

24. Should I do any special scar care after my operation?

After around two weeks, you can start treating your scars by gently massaging a little body lotion into the area.

25. When will I know whether I need corrective work?

The individual healing process takes time—you may still see swelling or redness several weeks or months after the procedure. The final results will not be visible for at least six months. After that, if you are not satisfied with the results, I would be glad to sit down with you at my clinic to discuss corrective options, including any necessary scar correction work.

Contact

Praxis für Plastische Chirurgie

Dr. med. Britta von Stumberg

Steinwiesstrasse 4
8032 Zürich

Phone: 044 320 04 34
Email: dr.von.stumberg@hin.ch
Website: www.mastektomie.ch