

Breast Lift

Q. How is a breast lift measured?

A. Doctors use a simple measuring gradient to see how much of a lift is needed to improve the look and elasticity of the breast tissues and skin. Ptosis is the medical term for when the skin loses its elasticity, causing loss of shape and structure to the breast tissues. Plastic surgeons categorize the severity of ptosis by evaluating the position of the nipple relative to the inframammary fold: the point at which the underside of the breast attaches to the chest wall. In the most advanced stage, the nipples are below the fold and point towards the ground. To calculate an individual's ptosis and how much lift and reshaping is needed, your plastic surgeon will make measurements.

Q. What is Ptosis?

A. There are four grades of ptosis:

- ▶ **Pseudoptosis** occurs when the lower breast gland tissue falls below the lower breast skin fold, but the nipple remains above the fold. This may be treated by placement of a larger than average breast implant, or by a circumareolar nipple lift and placement of a small to average size implant.
 - ▶ **Grade 1 Ptosis** occurs when the nipple is at the same level as the skin fold or up to 1 centimeter below it and the position of the nipples no longer points forward, but are positioned to the level of the breast creases.
 - ▶ **Grade 2 Ptosis** occurs when the nipple is 1 to 3 centimeters below the lower breast skin fold, and the position of the nipples is now facing in a downward position below the breast creases.
 - ▶ **Grade 3 Ptosis** occurs when the nipple is 3 or more centimeters below the lower breast skin fold, and the nipples will be far below the breast creases, and will be completely pointing toward the ground.
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Q. What types of breast lifts are there?

A. There are four main procedures doctors use as a foundation for the breast lift:

- ▶ **The Crescent:** removes a crescent shaped selection of tissue from above the areola to lift the nipple and breast upwards.
 - ▶ **The Benelli:** removes a small donut-shaped selection of tissue from around the areola to enhance the shape. This lift is only suitable where a small amount of tissue removal will accomplish the needed lift. If too much skin is removed, the result will be flat, square-shaped, looking breasts.
 - ▶ **The Benelli-Lollipop:** combines the Benelli lift with a vertical incision from the areola down to the base of the breast, to allow for more skin and tissue to be removed and contoured.
 - ▶ **Full Mastopexy:** is only used when ptosis is at the highest gradient. An anchor-shaped incision is made starting around the nipple and then vertically down to the base of the breast, and then curving to the left and right at the intersection. There are other variations such as a lateral incision. This procedure has the ability to move the nipple up to 8 centimeters.
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Q. How do I know what lift is right for me?

A. Your surgeon will go over the different types of lifts and measure your grade of ptosis to see what is right for your body type. Many times a breast lift is combined with a breast augmentation in order to restore volume.

Q. What is recovery like?

A. Recovery is similar to breast augmentation. Depending on the surgeon's preference, a supportive bra may be worn 24 hours, except to bathe, for up to four weeks following surgery. The breast tissues and surrounding area will be swollen, sore and often bruised, so physical activity (especially sexual and exercise) should be avoided and ice should be used to reduce swelling and promote healing.