Procedure Education & Recovery Guide

An educational resource for patients exploring cosmetic surgery.

At North Texas Surgical Arts, we believe informed patients feel more confident throughout their surgical journey. Understanding what a procedure involves, what it can address, and what to expect during recovery is an important part of preparing for surgery.

The following guide provides an overview of commonly requested surgical procedures and general recovery expectations.

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1. BODY CONTOURING PROCEDURES

Tummy Tuck (Abdominoplasty)

What is a tummy tuck?

A tummy tuck, medically known as an abdominoplasty, is a surgical procedure designed to remove excess abdominal skin and fat while tightening weakened or separated abdominal muscles when appropriate.

This procedure may benefit individuals experiencing loose abdominal skin, muscle separation following pregnancy, or changes in abdominal contour following significant weight loss.

What does the procedure address?

- Excess or hanging abdominal skin.
- Weakened or separated abdominal muscles.
- Loose abdominal tissue.
- Certain stretch marks located within the skin being removed.

General Recovery Timeline

- **Week 1:** Swelling, bruising, and discomfort are expected. Patients may need assistance with daily activities and may initially walk slightly bent at the waist.
- **Weeks 2–3:** Mobility generally improves. Some patients may be able to return to desk-based work, depending on healing and job requirements.
- **Weeks 4–6:** Activity may gradually increase as permitted by the surgeon. Heavy lifting and strenuous exercise may still be restricted.

- **Months 3–6+:** Swelling continues to improve, and abdominal contours become more apparent. Scar maturation continues for many months.

Liposuction

What is liposuction?

Liposuction is a surgical body contouring procedure that removes localized fat deposits using a thin instrument called a cannula.

It is commonly performed on areas such as the abdomen, waist, hips, thighs, back, arms, and chin.

Liposuction is designed to improve body contours rather than serve as a weight loss procedure. It does not correct significant loose skin or replace healthy lifestyle habits.

What does the procedure address?

- Localized pockets of stubborn fat.
- Areas resistant to diet and exercise.
- Uneven body contours.
- Excess fat deposits in targeted treatment areas.

General Recovery Timeline

- **Week 1:** Swelling, bruising, and soreness are common. Compression garments may be required, and activity should be limited.
- **Weeks 2–3:** Discomfort generally improves. Some patients can return to work depending on the extent of treatment.
- **Weeks 4–6:** Bruising typically continues to resolve, and swelling gradually decreases. Light exercise may be reintroduced when cleared.
- **Months 3–6+:** Residual swelling continues to improve, allowing the final contours to become more apparent.

Panniculectomy

What is a panniculectomy?

A panniculectomy is a surgical procedure that removes excess hanging skin and fatty tissue from the lower abdomen, commonly referred to as an abdominal pannus.

This procedure is often considered by individuals who have experienced significant weight loss or have excess abdominal tissue that causes physical discomfort, irritation, or hygiene difficulties.

Unlike a traditional tummy tuck, a panniculectomy typically does not include abdominal muscle tightening or comprehensive abdominal contouring.

What does the procedure address?

- Excess hanging skin of the lower abdomen.
- Skin irritation and recurring rashes associated with excess tissue.
- Hygiene difficulties caused by an abdominal pannus.
- Physical discomfort associated with excess abdominal tissue.

General Recovery Timeline

- **Week 1:** Swelling, bruising, and discomfort are expected. Patients may have surgical drains and need assistance with daily activities.
- **Weeks 2–3:** Mobility generally improves, and follow-up appointments help monitor incision healing and drain management.
- **Weeks 4–6:** Gradual improvement in activity and comfort. Lifting and strenuous exercise may remain restricted.
- **Months 3–6+:** Swelling continues to decrease, and the abdominal contour becomes more apparent. Scars continue to mature.

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2. BREAST PROCEDURES

Breast Augmentation

What is breast augmentation?

Breast augmentation is a surgical procedure designed to enhance breast volume, shape, and overall proportions. This is commonly accomplished using breast implants, with implant selection and placement determined during surgical planning.

Patients may consider breast augmentation to enhance naturally smaller breasts, restore volume following pregnancy or weight changes, or improve breast symmetry.

What does the procedure address?

- Limited natural breast volume.
- Loss of breast fullness.
- Changes in breast volume following pregnancy or weight loss.
- Certain breast asymmetries.

General Recovery Timeline

- **First Week:** Soreness, tightness, swelling, and bruising are common. Patients should limit activity and follow instructions regarding their support garments.
- **Weeks 2–3:** Discomfort generally improves, and many patients can resume light daily activities or desk-based work.
- **Weeks 4–6:** Activity may gradually increase with surgeon approval. Implants may continue settling into position.
- **Months 3–6+:** Swelling continues to resolve, and breast shape and implant position continue to settle.

Breast Lift (Mastopexy)

What is a breast lift?

A breast lift, also known as a mastopexy, is a surgical procedure that raises and reshapes the breasts by removing excess skin and tightening the surrounding tissue.

The nipple and areola may also be repositioned to a more elevated position.

Unlike breast augmentation, a breast lift primarily addresses breast position and skin laxity rather than adding significant volume.

What does the procedure address?

- Sagging or drooping breasts.
- Loss of breast firmness.
- Downward-pointing nipples.
- Stretched breast skin.
- Enlarged areolas when appropriate.

General Recovery Timeline

- **Week 1:** Swelling, bruising, and soreness are expected. A surgical support bra is commonly recommended.
- **Weeks 2–3:** Discomfort generally improves, and some patients can return to desk-based work.
- **Weeks 4–6:** Gradual return to activities as approved by the surgeon. Support garments may still be recommended.
- **Months 3–6+:** Breast shape continues to settle, swelling decreases, and incision lines begin to mature.

Breast Reduction (Reduction Mammaplasty)

What is breast reduction?

Breast reduction is a surgical procedure that removes excess breast tissue, fat, and skin to create smaller, lighter, and more proportionate breasts.

This procedure may also help alleviate physical discomfort associated with disproportionately large breasts.

What does the procedure address?

- Excessively large breasts.
- Neck, shoulder, and back discomfort associated with breast size.
- Shoulder grooving from bra straps.
- Skin irritation beneath the breasts.
- Breast asymmetry and disproportion.

General Recovery Timeline

- **Week 1:** Swelling, bruising, and discomfort are common. Activity is significantly limited while initial healing begins.
- **Weeks 2–3:** Many patients experience improved comfort and mobility. Return to work may be possible depending on the job.
- **Weeks 4–6:** Gradual increase in activity may be permitted. Continued use of a support bra may be recommended.
- **Months 3–6+:** Breast shape continues to settle, swelling decreases, and scars continue to mature.

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3. ARM & FACIAL PROCEDURES

Arm Lift (Brachioplasty)

What is an arm lift?

An arm lift, medically known as a brachioplasty, is a surgical procedure that removes excess skin and may address excess fat along the upper arms to create a smoother, more defined contour.

This procedure is commonly considered following significant weight loss or age related changes in skin elasticity.

What does the procedure address?

- Loose or hanging upper-arm skin.

- Excess skin following significant weight loss.
- Reduced skin firmness.
- Certain areas of excess upper-arm fat.

General Recovery Timeline

- **Week 1:** Swelling, bruising, and soreness are expected. Compression garments may be recommended to support healing.
- **Weeks 2–3:** Discomfort generally improves. Patients may gradually resume light daily activities as directed.
- **Weeks 4–6:** Activity can gradually increase with surgeon approval. Heavy lifting and strenuous arm movements may remain restricted.
- **Months 3–6+:** Swelling continues to decrease, arm contours become more visible, and incision lines continue to mature.

Facelift (Rhytidectomy)

What is a facelift?

A facelift is a surgical procedure designed to address visible signs of facial aging by repositioning underlying tissues and removing excess skin.

Depending on the patient's anatomy and goals, a facelift may improve the appearance of the lower face, jawline, and neck.

What does the procedure address?

- Loose facial skin.
- Sagging along the jawline.
- Deep creases around the lower face.
- Loss of definition along the jawline.
- Certain signs of aging in the neck.

General Recovery Timeline

- **Week 1:** Swelling, bruising, and tightness are common. Patients should rest and follow instructions regarding incision care and activity.
- **Weeks 2–3:** Bruising and swelling generally improve. Many patients feel comfortable returning to public activities within approximately 10–14 days, depending on healing.
- **Weeks 4–6:** Continued improvement in swelling and comfort. Activity can gradually increase as approved.
- **Months 2–3+:** Facial tissues continue healing, and sensation, tightness, and residual swelling may continue to improve.

4. COMBINATION PROCEDURES

Mommy Makeover

What is a Mommy Makeover?

A Mommy Makeover is a customized combination of cosmetic procedures designed to address physical changes that may occur following pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Rather than being one specific operation, a Mommy Makeover combines procedures selected according to the patient's individual anatomy and aesthetic goals.

Common procedures may include:

- Tummy tuck.
- Liposuction.
- Breast augmentation.
- Breast lift.
- Breast reduction.

The combination of procedures is determined by the surgeon based on patient health, goals, and surgical safety.

What does the procedure address?

- Changes in abdominal skin and muscle tone.
- Loss of breast volume.
- Breast sagging.
- Localized fat deposits.
- Changes in overall body contours following pregnancy.

General Recovery Timeline

- **Week 1:** Initial recovery involves swelling, bruising, and discomfort across the treated areas. Assistance at home is generally recommended.
- **Weeks 2–3:** Mobility and comfort gradually improve. Some patients may be able to return to desk-based work depending on the procedures performed.
- **Weeks 4–6:** Activity may gradually increase with surgeon approval. Heavy lifting and strenuous exercise may remain restricted.
- **Months 3–6+:** Swelling continues to resolve, and breast and abdominal contours become more apparent. Final results may take longer depending on the combination of procedures.

UNDERSTANDING THE HEALING PROCESS

Healing is not always linear. Patients may notice changes in swelling, bruising, incision appearance, and overall comfort throughout recovery.A few important things to remember:

Swelling is normal. Postoperative swelling is part of the body's natural healing response and may persist for weeks or months.

Scars take time to mature. Incision lines may initially appear red, raised, or firm before gradually softening and fading. Scar maturation can take a year or longer.

Results develop gradually. Initial postoperative changes are not necessarily representative of final results. Healing tissues and residual swelling can temporarily affect appearance.

Recovery is individual. Two patients undergoing the same procedure may experience different recovery timelines based on their health, anatomy, surgical technique, and individual healing response.

Following instructions matters. Attending follow-up appointments, caring for incisions properly, and following activity restrictions are important parts of recovery.

WHEN SHOULD I CONTACT MY SURGICAL TEAM?

Patients should contact their surgical team if they experience concerns such as:

- Increasing redness, warmth, or drainage around an incision.
- Worsening pain or swelling.
- Fever or chills.
- New or concerning changes at the surgical site.
- Any symptoms that seem unusual or inconsistent with their postoperative instructions.

Seek emergency medical attention immediately for chest pain, shortness of breath, fainting, or other severe or sudden symptoms.

YOUR JOURNEY STARTS WITH AN INFORMED DECISION

Choosing to undergo surgery is a personal decision, and understanding your options is an important first step.

At North Texas Surgical Arts, we encourage patients to ask questions, understand their options, and work with their surgeon to develop a treatment plan tailored to their individual needs.

Ready to explore your options?

Schedule a consultation with North Texas Surgical Arts.

Phone: (469) 887-1508

Website: www.northtexassurgicalarts.com

IMPORTANT EDUCATIONAL DISCLAIMER

This guide is intended for general educational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis, or individualized postoperative instructions. Recovery timelines are estimates and vary by procedure, surgical technique, patient health, and individual healing. Not every procedure or treatment is appropriate for every patient.

Patients should always follow their surgeon's specific preoperative and postoperative instructions.