

## Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

# Bra advice for patients following breast reconstruction

Following breast reconstruction you will need to wear a support bra night and day for the first three months. This leaflet is designed to give you some help and information as to where you can purchase them and help you choose the right size. You need to do this before going into hospital.

- You will need a minimum of **two firm control or sports bras** – one to wear, one to wash. Do not purchase too many initially as your size will change as swelling reduces.

As everyone is different and some women/patients experience more swelling than others, we advise you to keep all the packaging and labels intact. Bring your receipts with you into hospital and have a friend or partner on standby who is able to change them for you if they do not fit properly. You will be fitted into your bra before you are discharged.

### How to choose your bra

Here are some guidelines to consider when purchasing your bras. The bra must be supportive, comfortable, and must not have underwire – these are the essential requirements. If possible, it should also be seamless.

- If possible, be professionally fitted to ensure you are wearing the correct size. You will need to buy a bra that is a **band size bigger** than what you measure but the **same cup size**. For example, if you are measured as a **34B**, you need to buy a **36B**. This will allow for any swelling around your chest and any post-operative dressings to be accommodated within the bra.
- It is also advisable to buy a **bra extender**, which is a small piece that fits into the back of the bra to allow more room in the initial post surgery period. It will save you having to replace expensive bras after only a few weeks.

A nurse in the Plastic Surgery Department will help you with adjusting your bra a few days after your surgery.

## If you are having reconstruction using tissue from your tummy:

If you are having a reconstruction using tissue from your tummy, you will also require **firm control support pants**. You will need to wear these night and day for three months, so a few pairs are recommended. In the initial period, wearing your 'normal' pants underneath can make them easier to get on and off.

When choosing which abdominal support garment to purchase, there are some principles you need to consider. The pants must be supportive (often labelled as 'firm control'), high waisted and must not have boning. They will probably not be cotton; however, cotton briefs can be worn underneath for comfort if you wish. We advise you buy them in your **usual size**.

If you require anything different from what is mentioned above, the Plastic Surgery nurses will advise you. Contact details?

## Where to purchase your garments?

### Department Stores:

John Lewis and Marks and Spencer department stores both have a good range of brands available and have staff trained to fit garments for those having breast reconstruction surgery. available by appointment in their lingerie departments.

### Independent Retailers:

For those who live **north** of Cambridge, a good range of brands and a specialist fitting service is available at:

- Lady Jayne's Lingerie, 3 Crown Street, St Ives, PE27 5EB

For those who live **south** of Cambridge, a good range of brands and a specialist fitting service is available at:

- Better than Chocolate, 3 The Cockpit, off Market Hill, Saffron Walden CB10 1HL

### Online Retailers:

There are many online retailers where garments are available and a list of a few is given below:

[www.johnlewis.com](http://www.johnlewis.com)

[www.marksandspencer.com](http://www.marksandspencer.com)

[www.figleaves.co.uk](http://www.figleaves.co.uk)

[www.underthetop.com](http://www.underthetop.com)



We are currently working towards a smoke-free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS Stop Smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

### Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or

[patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)



### Document history

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