



Insider's Guide to
**BREAST
REDUCTION**

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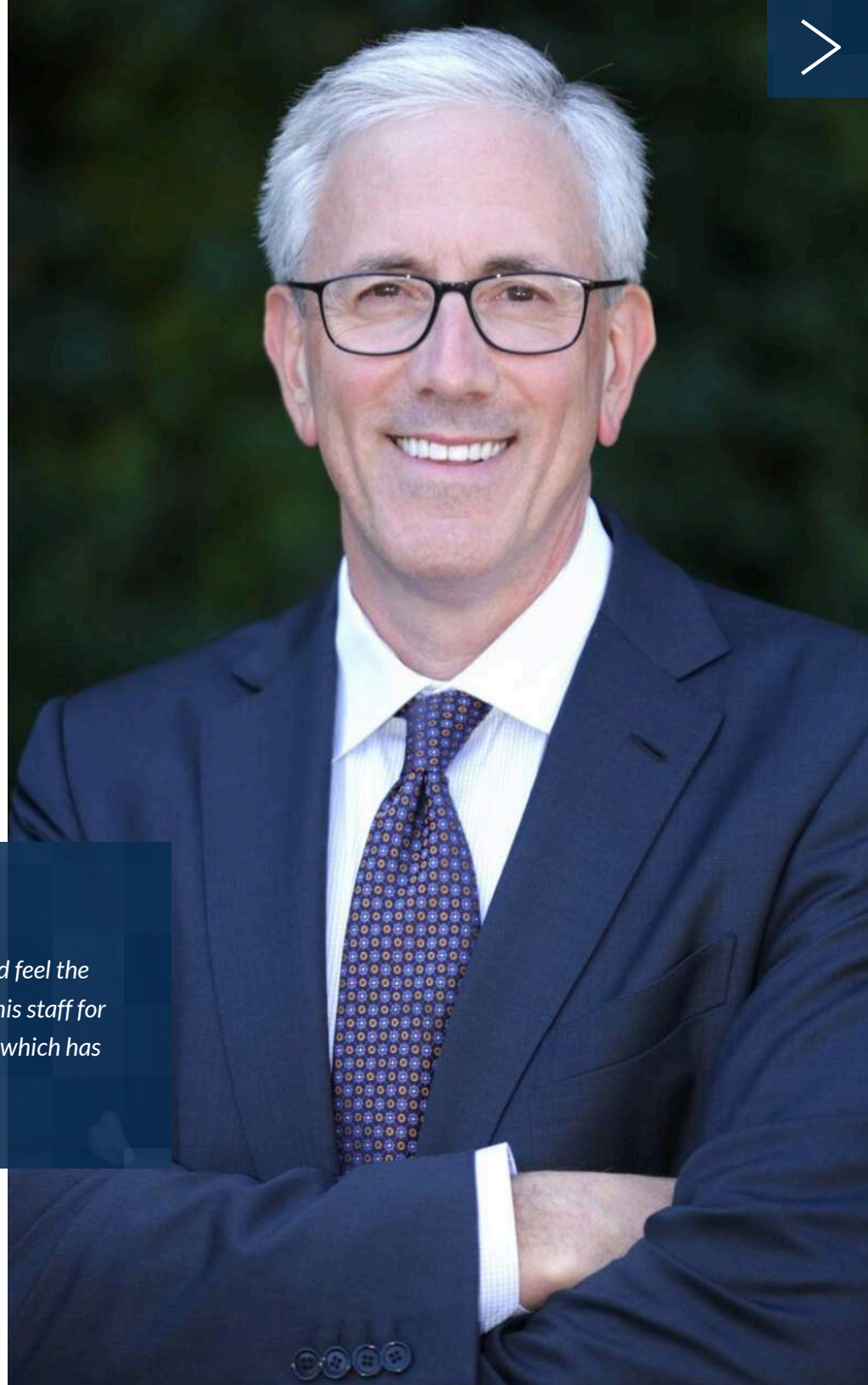
A Life-Changing Procedure

Few of my patients are as deeply appreciative of their results as women who get breast reduction surgery. Most consider it a life-changing procedure that provides both physical and emotional relief. Overly large breasts can cause back and shoulder pain, limit their physical activity, and attract unwanted attention. Not to mention the frustration of trying to find stylish clothes that fit.

Breast reduction surgery is much more than a cosmetic procedure. If you're reading this, chances are you've encountered obstacles simply because of the size of your breasts. Even the most supportive sports bras do little to make exercising or running a comfortable experience. Perhaps you've had people stare or make assumptions about your personality. One of the most truly satisfying aspects of my job is to hear or read comments such as the one below.

REAL PATIENT TESTIMONIAL

"I didn't imagine I could be so happy with the outcome. My breasts now look and feel the perfect size for my body. I want to say thank you so much to Dr. Romanelli and his staff for making me feel comfortable and confident enough to proceed with this surgery which has completely changed my life. Thank you!"



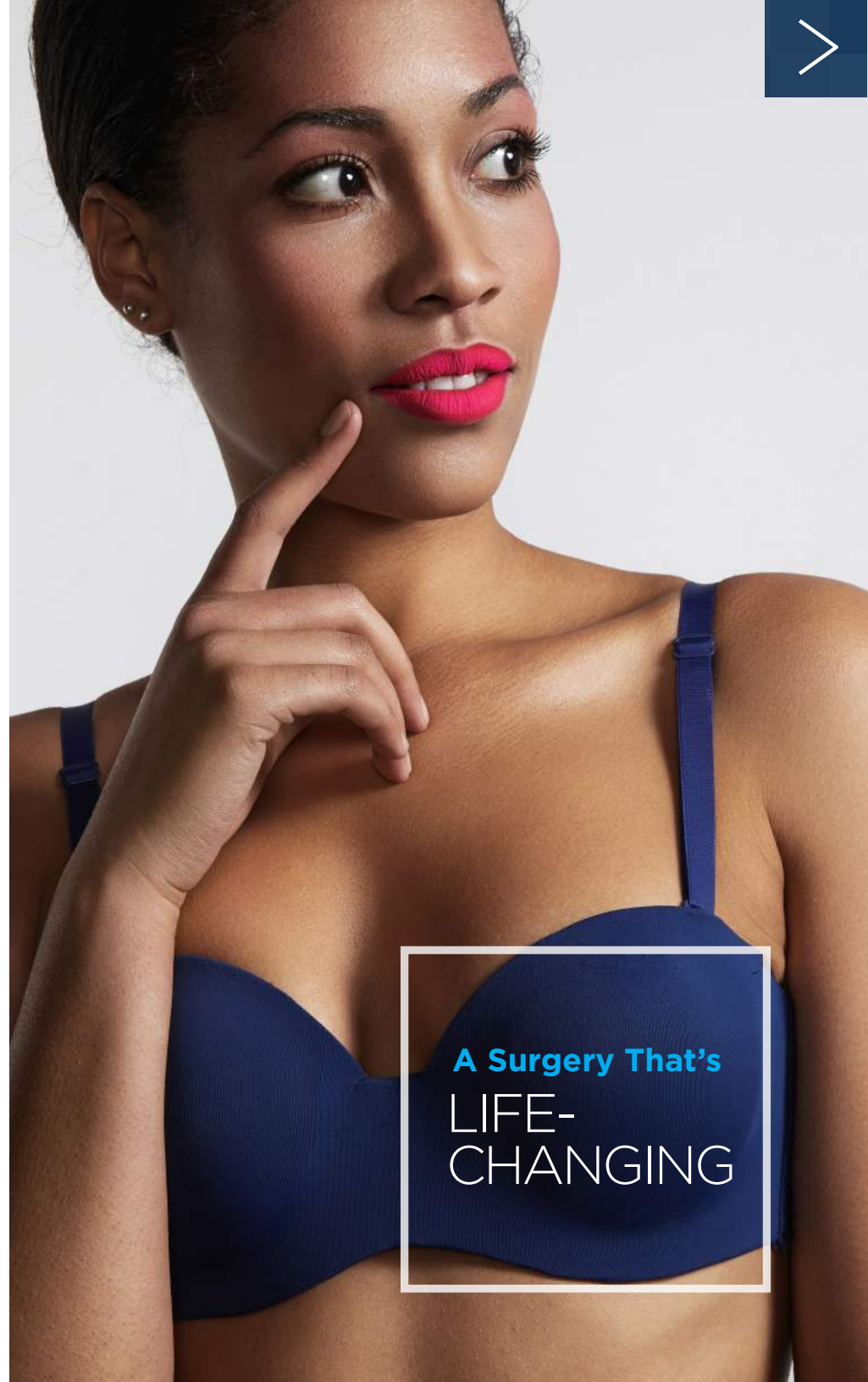
Are You a Candidate?

A breast reduction with Dr. James Romanelli is an option for women of all ages. Each woman's situation is unique, and the proper approach depends on both her physical characteristics and her symptoms. Day-to-day life can be a challenge for women with oversized, pendulous breasts. And, because overly large breasts can cause medical problems, the procedure is often covered by insurance.

Younger women —and, in some cases, older adolescents —often seek breast reduction surgery for both emotional and physical reasons.

Attracting unwanted attention can undermine their self-esteem at a sensitive time in their lives. Having overly large breasts may also limit their ability to participate in competitive sports, which can be an important consideration. As plastic surgeons, we help younger patients who may want to significantly reduce the size of their breasts understand that being proportional is usually the best goal. We provide the long-term vision that can be difficult for younger patients to imagine. We can generally create excellent results that won't be compromised by future pregnancies and breastfeeding.

Women whose breast size increased after having children often have breasts that sit lower than those of women with similar bodies who haven't had children. In these cases, more skin needs to be removed. Provided the patient is relatively certain that she is finished having children, breast reduction can provide life-long results.



A Surgery That's
**LIFE-
CHANGING**

The Results Can Be

BETTER
THAN YOU
IMAGINED

In one study of 133 women

93% reported a decrease
in symptoms

In another survey of 185 women

97% reported reduced back,
shoulder, and neck pain

95% said they were happy or
very happy with the results
of surgery

98% said they would
recommend it to others





What to Expect at Your Consultation

The consultation is the first step in making that dream a reality.

Consulting with a plastic surgeon about breast reduction can be exciting and a bit nerve-wracking. Many women spend years thinking about having surgery to reduce the size of their breasts before making the decision to move forward with their dreams.

For the surgeon, the consultation involves having an honest, open conversation with the patient and performing a physical exam.

Great plastic surgery results begin with the consultation. You may have heard this before, and it's true. From a patient's perspective, it's the time to have your questions answered and to decide if you feel comfortable with the plastic surgeon and his or her practice.

The Conversation


You have likely done your due diligence already

You may have conducted quite a bit of research online about the breast reduction procedure by the time you come in for a consultation, but it's important for us to provide a thorough overview of the surgery and the techniques we use.

- We will ask about your medical history and family breast health history.
- If you are not up-to-date with recommendations for mammography, we may recommend that you have a mammogram before the surgery.



A Consultation
IS THE
FIRST
STEP



In addition, there are some key points we evaluate during our discussion:

Motivation

We want to get the sense that a patient is truly committed to wanting smaller breasts.

The fact that she scheduled a consultation is a fairly good indicator, but in some cases, it becomes clear that a patient is still on the fence about having the surgery. That's not a good situation for either the surgeon or the patient and can result in disappointment following the procedure—even if the outcome is successful.

Clarity

This is really about matching the specific surgical procedure to the patient's aesthetic goals. By talking about patient goals, we can distinguish between women who really want a breast lift —without much or any reduction in size —and those who truly desire smaller breasts.

Acceptance

Breast reduction surgery involves a trade-off. Your breasts will have a more proportional shape and no longer cause discomfort due to their size, but you'll have scars. Even though most scars fade quite a bit over time, no one should agree to breast reduction surgery thinking there won't be scars.



Realistic Expectations

Patients can expect their breasts to be smaller and more elevated, but they won't look like the results created with breast implants.

The Physical Exam

After our discussion, we will leave the room so that you can change into a gown. One of our nurses will remain in the exam room while we evaluate the tone of the breast skin (its elasticity) and the quality of the breast tissue. We measure the distance from the sternal notch (the little, bony hollow spot between the collar bones) to the nipples, and also from the nipple to the fold beneath the breast. These measurements help determine the technique that best suits your needs.

REAL PATIENT TESTIMONIAL

"Dr. Romanelli is a wonderful physician. I am so pleased with my results and with my entire experience dealing with Dr. Romanelli and his staff, from my first consultation to my series of post-op appointments. Dr. Romanelli listened attentively to all of my concerns and my desired results."



Insurance Payment/Financing

In many cases, insurance companies will cover breast reduction surgery as a “medically necessary procedure.” Some policies require you to get a referral from your primary care doctor, or documentation from your doctor, chiropractor, or physical therapist indicating that breast reduction will help you. In addition, insurance companies generally have guidelines that base coverage on your height, weight, and the amount of tissue to be removed from your breasts.

The most frequently used reference for how much tissue needs to be removed to qualify for breast reduction as “medically necessary” is called the Schnur scale. A calculation that compares the patient’s body surface area (BSA) and the amount of tissue being removed against the Schnur scale indicates if the procedure is considered medically necessary. At consultation, we review with patients how much of a reduction is desired. From this, we estimate (in grams) the amount of tissue to be removed. We provide this information to your insurance company, along with photographs, if requested.

From there, our staff works with your insurance company to get the surgery approved. Your weight may not play a role in the approval process, especially if the surgery

is recommended by your plastic surgeon or primary care doctor. The best way to understand exactly what you need is to call a respected plastic surgeon who can help you with the process.

Our staff has extensive experience working with insurers for breast reduction procedures, which greatly benefits our patients. They’re dedicated to helping breast reduction patients get the maximum coverage possible.

If health insurance doesn’t cover all or part of the costs, private payment and financing options are available. Financing through companies that specialize in health care credit is an attractive option for qualified patients.



Your Insurance
MIGHT
COVER
THE COST



Procedure Overview: Pre-op Through Surgery

Getting ready: Once you've made the choice to get breast reduction surgery, the time leading up to the procedure can be both exciting and can raise concerns. Prepping for your surgery is important to ensure you can rest and relax as much as possible during the recovery period.

Pre-op: I provide all of my patients with thorough instructions to follow, both before and after the procedure. Some of the pre-op steps you'll need to take care of include:

Smoking: If you're a smoker, you'll need to stop at least a month prior to surgery. Smoking increases the risk of complications both during and after surgery.

Weight: It's a good idea to be at a healthy weight before undergoing breast reduction surgery. In certain cases, you'll need to meet a weight-loss goal before it's safe to have the surgery.

Food preparation: Stock your refrigerator with prepared meals, especially ones high in protein, along with fresh fruits and vegetables.

It helps to avoid foods and drinks that are high in sodium during the recovery.

Clothing: Make sure your wardrobe includes loose blouses that don't need to be pulled over your head. Your arms will have a limited range of motion as you heal, so also make sure you don't have to reach for any essential items.

Everything in arm's reach: Prepare your home for comfort while you recover the first few days. Make sure it's easy to charge any electronic devices you'll want to use, have the TV remote or game console controller easily accessible, and put magazines or books on a nearby nightstand.

Prescriptions on hand: Your prescriptions will be sent electronically to your pharmacy after your pre-op visit. Be sure that they are filled prior to the surgery.



Getting Ready
FOR
SURGERY

Your Procedure

Dr. Romanelli's Unique Approach

The unique surgical techniques we use in the vast majority of breast reduction procedures minimize bleeding and eliminate the use of post-operative drains. When Dr. Romanelli was a surgical resident, one of his relatives underwent breast reduction and lost so much blood she almost needed a transfusion. It took weeks for her to fully recover, and he vowed to avoid that issue for my patients.

In more than 25 years, none of his breast reduction patients has ever needed a blood transfusion. There are two specific steps we take during surgery that help minimize bleeding:

1. We inject breasts with a solution that includes a local anesthetic and a small amount of epinephrine (adrenaline) after the patient is asleep. This is similar to the solution used during liposuction to limit bleeding.

2. We use great care in making sure to carefully seal any small bleeding blood vessels during the surgery (a process called hemostasis).

We also have virtually eliminated using surgical drains for breast reduction patients (and for our tummy tuck patients, too.) The careful sealing of blood vessels is an integral part of avoiding the use of drains. Additionally, we suture the breast tissue using a technique that makes drains unnecessary. The role of surgical drains — which typically remain in place for at least 2 or 3 days — is to remove excess fluid that can be trapped just below the skin. The surgical techniques we use minimize bleeding to the extent that drains are only rarely needed.

Not only do our patients appreciate not having uncomfortable drains to deal with during the initial phase of recovery, we believe that avoiding drains whenever possible reduces the risk of infection at the incision sites.



Incisions/Scars

The incision pattern used for breast reduction surgery depends on the elasticity of a patient’s skin, how much breast tissue I remove, and the desired results. In the majority of breast reduction procedures —up to 95% of patients —I use a vertical incision pattern (often called the “lollipop” incision). This technique involves making an incision around the areola and then a vertical incision from the areola, down the center of the breast, to the inframammary fold (where the bottom of the breast connects to the chest wall).

Advantage of this approach

One of the greatest advantages of this method of breast reduction is that it produces the best-looking breast short-term; the breasts may even look as full and as high as breast implants. Longer-term, as they soften and settle, they maintain great shape—to my eye—better than the other methods of breast reduction.

Anchor incision

About 3% to 4% of my patients are best served by using the “anchor” incision, which involves making a horizontal incision along the inframammary fold. The anchor-shaped incision pattern allows me to manage the great excess of skin that some women need to have removed with their breast reduction.

Free nipple graft

For a small percentage of patients (perhaps 1%), who have extremely large breasts, I may perform what’s called a free nipple graft breast reduction. Using this technique, I actually detach the nipple-areola complex (NAC) from the breast and remove the great excess of breast tissue and skin. I then refashion the remaining skin and breast tissue to produce the desired size and shape. I complete the surgery by grafting the nipple and areola back to the breast in a way that looks natural.



The Goal:
**LESS
VISABLE
SCARS**

Incisions/Scars (Continued)

Any time a surgeon makes an incision, there will be a scar. I discuss this with all cosmetic surgery patients during the consultation, so they understand that there is a trade-off involved. The vast majority of breast reduction patients I talk to are more than willing to have one or two scars—which typically fade over time with proper care—in exchange for relief from the physical pain and for increased self-esteem.

After surgery, our patients are given instructions on how to manage the incisions as they heal. This helps to minimize scars. Generally, we begin with moisturizing creams starting just a week or so after surgery. By week 3–4, we begin scar gels and massage. These methods are usually enough to manage the incision. If you remain concerned

about the appearance of your scars, there are many effective treatments that can lighten them, including lasers, injections, and topical ointment.

Anesthesia & Surgery

We evaluate each patient's overall medical history and health. If needed, we ask that a patient see her primary care doctor for a pre-operative medical evaluation. However, in most cases, this is not necessary.

Breast reduction surgery is most comfortably performed under light general anesthesia. We use board certified physician anesthesiologists to care for our patients during breast reduction surgery. The procedure generally takes about 1½ to 2 hours to complete—but for the sleeping patient, it feels like a short nap.



An option for
**WOMAN
OF ALL
AGES**



Recovery/What to Expect

Manageable recovery – often to patients’ surprise

Breast reduction surgery patients often worry more about getting through the recovery than they do about the procedure itself. And, almost as often, they are pleasantly surprised to discover that their recovery is manageable and involves less discomfort than anticipated. That’s not to say your recovery after breast reduction surgery will be a breeze, but for most patients it goes smoothly if they follow the post-op instructions provided by my staff and me.

Expect to be sore and tired for the first couple of days, at least.

Take plenty of time to rest and heal and don’t overdo any activities, even if you feel better than expected. We recommend you avoid lifting anything heavy or reaching high above your head during the first few days. It’s normal to be excited by your results after having breast reduction. But being patient during the recovery process

will minimize the risk of complications and reduce scarring, ensuring that your results are just as beautiful as you’d imagined they would be. In most cases, we use dissolvable sutures. There are few, if any, sutures to be removed. Showering can begin 48 hours after surgery. Other issues you can expect to experience during recovery include the following.

Bruising

This doesn’t occur for every patient, but some bruising is a normal side effect following breast reduction.

Swelling

Many of the questions asked by patients after having surgery involve the normal duration of postsurgical swelling. Even though much of the swelling resolves fairly quickly, some swelling can last for three to four months. Stay hydrated, limit your sodium intake, and do some light activity to help reduce swelling during your recovery.





Nipple sensitivity or numbness

Worries about losing sensation in the nipples are common. Numbness or, even more commonly, super sensitivity, is pretty typical in the first few weeks and months after your surgery, but normal sensation returns for the majority of patients. In the 1% of patients who undergo free nipple grafting, there will be no nipple sensation. If the procedure is recommended, it is thoroughly discussed prior to surgery—there are no surprises.

Patients should plan on taking about a week off from work or school, but every individual's situation is unique. If your job requires strenuous activities,

or even just lifting heavy boxes, you may need more time off. You will also need to continue wearing a surgical bra or sports bra for the first few weeks. Maintaining your weight is the best thing you can do to ensure your beautiful results last for many years. Significant weight gain and loss following a breast reduction will stretch out the skin and can cause the breasts to droop. This sometimes leads to the need for a revisionary breast lift procedure. Other steps, such as following your surgeon's post-operative instructions, will enhance your results.



REAL PATIENT TESTIMONIAL

"Dr. Romanelli is an excellent physician. He is very knowledgeable, honest and patient with you. I went to him for a breast reduction and couldn't be happier with the results. My experience has been life changing!!!"

Surprising Facts About Breast Reduction

Even patients who have done their breast reduction surgery homework before scheduling a consultation are often surprised to learn about other benefits associated with the procedure, besides relief from the aches and pains caused by their oversized breasts. Here are some facts you might not know about breast reduction.

You can get a breast lift, too

A breast lift is actually an integral part of all breast reduction procedures. Combining a lift with the reduction improves the breast shape, elevates the nipple-areola complex, and results in perkier breasts that appear more youthful.

Inverted nipples can be corrected at the same time:

For women with inverted nipples, breast reduction may be a good time to address these concerns.

You can have smaller areolas:

Enlarged areolae —the darker skin surrounding the nipples —are often associated with overly large

breasts. Reducing the size of the areolae is generally part of every breast reduction, to maintain ideal proportion. A smaller areola is usually desired by breast reduction patients, and will be discussed during your consultation.

Studies show it improves your sex life:

A study published in *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*®, the medical journal of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS), found that breast reduction patients' physical and mental well-being improved following the surgery. That included more satisfaction with their sex lives, in addition to other quality of life measurements.

It can be a catalyst for weight loss:

Patients considering breast reduction who are overweight typically need to lose some weight to be good candidates for the procedure. In many cases, that leads to lifestyle changes, including pursuing more strenuous activities that were previously uncomfortable to perform because of having oversized breasts.



Life After Breast Reduction

We are constantly reminded of how impactful this surgery is for the women who choose it. Relieving the heavy weight of overly large breasts, reducing the pulling of bra straps on shoulders, and reducing neck and back pain are some of the benefits our patients tell us about. But let's hear directly from them:

REAL PATIENT TESTIMONIALS

"Dr. Romanelli and his staff were very professional and provided excellent service from my initial breast reduction/lift consultation all the way through to my post-surgery appointments. I'm thrilled with my results!"

"I just wanted to express to you how happy I am with my breast reduction and lift. WOW! I feel like I'm 16 again! This was one of the best things I have ever done for myself and it will only look better as time goes by. With that said, I want to thank you and your staff for all of it. Dr. Romanelli, you did a perfect job and I would recommend you to anyone looking to do this procedure. It is going to make my life SO much easier and better, seriously! Also, your staff was very patient with me as I called almost every day with another request or question leading up to my surgery date. Thank you again!!!"

