

Breast Reduction – PRIOR APPROVAL

The evidence highlights that breast reduction is only successful in specific circumstances and the procedure can lead to complications - for example not being able to breast feed permanently. However in some cases breast reduction surgery is necessary where large breasts impact on day to day life, for example ability to drive a car. Therefore, breast reduction should only be undertaken under specific criteria.

Wearing a professionally fitted bra, losing weight (if necessary), managing pain and physiotherapy often work well to help with symptoms like back pain from large breasts.

The NHS will only provide breast reduction for women if **all** the following criteria are met:

- The woman has received a full package of supportive care from their GP such as advice on weight loss and managing pain.
- In cases of thoracic/ shoulder girdle discomfort, a physiotherapy assessment has been provided.
- Breast size results in functional symptoms that require other treatments / interventions (e.g. intractable candidal intertrigo; thoracic backache/kyphosis where a professionally fitted bra has not helped with backache, soft tissue indentations at site of bra straps).
- Breast reduction planned to be 500gms or more per breast or at least 4 cup sizes.
- Body mass index (BMI) is <27 and stable for at least twelve months.
- Women must be provided with written information to allow her to balance the risks and benefits of breast surgery.
- Women should be informed that smoking increases complications following breast reduction surgery and should be advised to stop smoking.
- Women should be informed that breast surgery for hypermastia can cause permanent loss of lactation.

Evidence required in relation to the above points and in addition to the above, the following will also be required:

- A report from a physiotherapy assessment carried out within 6 months of the request being made. The report must clearly give an opinion as to the cause of the patient's pain.
- Written confirmation from a professional bra fitter of a professional bra fitting being carried out within 6 months of the request being submitted
- BMI to have been measured within 2 months of the request being submitted
- For requests following bariatric surgery, the patient is at least 18 months post bariatric surgery

Unilateral breast reduction is considered for asymmetric breasts as opposed to breast augmentation via the IFR process.

Resection weights, for bilateral or unilateral (both breasts or one breast) breast reduction should be recorded for audit purposes.

This criteria does not apply to therapeutic mammoplasty for breast cancer treatment or contralateral (other side) surgery following breast cancer surgery, and local policies should be adhered to. The Association of Breast Surgery support contralateral surgery to improve cosmesis as part of the reconstruction process following breast cancer treatment.