

quick recovery breast augmentation

Minneapolis plastic surgeon

Joe Gryskiewicz MD is an advocate of 'speedy' breast augmentation, which offers patients a quick and relatively pain-free recovery. Lise Taylor investigates.

Some women are reluctant to undergo breast augmentation surgery because of the long, painful recovery period that usually follows the procedure. Recovery with the traditional approach can take up to three weeks because of trauma to the ribs and breast tissue. Patients are advised to avoid upper body movement for the first week and a half to help minimize bruising and swelling, and medication is needed for post-operative pain. But with the quick-recovery approach advocated by Minneapolis plastic surgeon Joe Gryskiewicz MD, recovery can be, as the name suggests, speedier.

The quick-recovery approach to breast augmentation was conceived by Dallas, TX, plastic surgeon John Tebbetts MD, and Dr. Gryskiewicz spent considerable time

with him learning the technique. 'Before the development of this technique, patients would often spend two to three weeks after the procedure stiff with pain and feeling very uncomfortable. But thanks to this new approach, patients are well and truly on the road to recovery in 24 hours,' he says. 'Not too many women can smile and raise their arms within 24 hours of a breast augmentation procedure.'

Rapid-recovery breast augmentation is also known as the 'no-touch' technique. This surgical procedure uses

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special instruments and techniques to minimize tissue damage and avoid touching the ribs (hence the term 'no-touch'). It causes far less trauma to the surrounding tissue than traditional approaches, and it dramatically reduces the patient's pain and suffering as well as their recovery time.

'When I began using this technique, my staff and I interviewed each patient post-operatively to assess the results. We discovered 95 percent returned to normal daily activities within 24 hours,' Dr. Gryskiewicz reveals. 'One of my patients reported she had folded three loads of laundry and bathed her two boys the evening after surgery, and a second patient worked a full day at her office the day after her surgery. Another went to a movie eight hours after the operation.'

He explains that one of the keys to the quick-recovery approach is for the surgeon to never touch the patient's ribs with anything hard such as a metal retractor because this can cause micro-bleeding in the lining of the bone, called the periosteum, and in the perichondrium, which is the lining of the rib cartilage.

'Blood is very irritating to the body and causes a lot of pain. Therefore the aim of the quick-recovery technique is to cause minimal bleeding and, if the patient does have any bleeding, it's important to irrigate the pockets early to remove the blood,' he explains. 'In addition, if the ribs are damaged, they take a long time to heal. It's not, therefore, the insertion of the implants that makes recovery uncomfortable and painful with the standard breast augmentation technique, it is the damage that the surgeon causes in performing it. With speedy breast augmentation, the surgeon is gentle with the breast and, because of this, recovery is quick and far less painful.'

Dr. Gryskiewicz acknowledges, 'The speedy technique is not magic, even though it sometimes seems that way when it's compared to the old techniques. My staff and I, as well as the anesthesiologists and recovery-room nurses, absolutely, unequivocally, see a significant difference in my patients' recovery times. I now recommend this technique

for almost all of my breast augmentation patients.'

After surgery, Dr. Gryskiewicz recommends that his patients do three things to further speed their recovery process. The first is for them to raise their arms over their heads, which should be attempted six to eight hours after surgery, and a set of three arm raises should be performed every hour before going to bed.

His second recommendation is for patients not to 'baby' their breasts. In other words, patients need to know that going about their daily routine will not hurt or rupture their implants or rip open the stitches.

Lastly, he recommends that patients lie on their breasts for 15 minutes every day, starting on the evening of the surgery. He says that this should be part of the patient's daily routine because it will lessen their risk of developing scar tissue around the implants. Patients can usually return to work within a few days, depending on the activity level their job requires.

The breasts will initially be sensitive to direct stimulation, so Dr. Gryskiewicz advises his patients to avoid physical contact for the first two to three weeks after surgery. The scars are likely to be firm and pink for at least six weeks and may even appear to widen but they'll fade and flatten over time – although they'll never completely disappear.

Risks associated with the procedure – such as implant rupture, capsular contracture, calcification, wrinkling and folds – are no different to that of the traditional breast augmentation and should be discussed with your surgeon. Dr. Gryskiewicz says it's important to be aware of these complications because they can occur. **cbm**

