

## Inverted Nipples

*General procedure information*

When people think about surgery to enhance the appearance of the breast, they usually think about enlargement, reduction or uplift. However, for many women it is the appearance of their nipples that concerns them most. These women are pleased to learn that there are cosmetic procedures to enhance just the nipple and surrounding area.

To understand these procedures, it is important to remember that what most people think of as “the nipple” is actually made up of two parts: the nipple, which is the area that protrudes, and the dark pigmented skin around the nipple, which is called the areola.

### Correcting inverted nipples

A nipple is said to be inverted if it points inward. Depending on the degree of inversion it may look flat or like a slit-like depression or a hole at the normal nipple location.

Approximately 2% of women have inverted nipples. In most cases, this condition has existed from birth and is caused by the nipple being tethered to shortened underlying milk ducts. The condition may also be caused by scar tissue beneath the nipple from previous surgery or infection.

Inverted nipples can be repaired by surgically releasing the tethering structures and using a suturing technique that keeps the nipples facing outward. This surgery can be performed at the same time as other breast surgery, however if there is any doubt about the appropriateness of doing this, the nipple repair surgery should be performed at a later date.

### Reducing large nipples

Large nipples may be inherited or they may develop after childbirth and breastfeeding. Either way, nipples that are too large - either in circumference or length - can affect a woman's appearance both in and out of clothing.

- If you are considering surgery to correct this condition, your surgeon will first determine which part of the nipple needs to be reduced. Depending on the shape or your nipples, a reduction in length, width or both may be appropriate.
- If your nipples are too long and either droop down or project too far out, your surgeon will create a shorter nipple length by removing the tip of the nipple and suturing for closure. Occasionally the skin along the neck of the nipple will also be removed. In those cases, the tip of the nipple is then sutured to the bottom of the nipple, creating a shorter length.

If your nipples are too wide or thick, but not too long, a pie-shaped wedge will be removed. This allows the nipple to be “taken in,” reducing its circumference. Dissolving sutures are used.



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Surgery to reduce nipple size can be performed on an out-patient basis, often using local anaesthesia, and usually takes less than an hour. You can expect to return to your normal activities within a day or two.

Healing from this procedure is rapid and scarring (if any) is rarely visible. In most cases normal sensitivity is maintained.