



Getting Ready for Explant Surgery

INSIDER TIPS & TRICKS

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Introduction

Planning Ahead

Removing breast implants is an individual experience.

For some women, it can be a huge relief. Especially if they feel their implants were making them sick.

Changing the way your body looks can also bring up *all the feels*. Some can't wait to get their original body back, while others grieve the loss of what made them feel comfortable in their own skin.

Naturally, it can be scary to take a big step like this. So many unknowns!

One thing that helps? Being as prepared as possible.

Here, you'll get some of the best insider tips and tricks from women who have undergone breast implant surgery already.

Where did we get our intel?...

•**Patients:** Our patients are experts. We listen to what's helped them and are passing the wisdom along to you.

•**Online communities:** Explant surgeries are like snowflakes. None are truly the same. Which is why we also curated the best bits of advice found in online communities.

•**Our experience:** We're health practitioners, which means we want you to be healthy and happy. That's why you'll also find some suggestions on proven ways to care of your mind and body before and after surgery.



Supplies

Things to Get

Before heading into surgery, here is a list of supplies we suggest having on hand:

- ❑ 3 or more zip-up shirts — you probably won't be able to raise your arms above your head for a while
 - ❑ 3 or more bottoms that are easy to pull up (i.e., not Spanx)
 - ❑ Shoes that easily slide on and off
 - ❑ Compression bra if your doctor says you'll need one
 - ❑ Safety pins so you can pin your drains to your shirt. Alternatively, a lanyard on which you can hook your drains, if applicable
 - ❑ Eyeglasses if you normally wear contacts
 - ❑ A purse that doesn't cross your chest. Better yet, a fanny pack. They're back in style!
 - ❑ Alcohol prep pads
 - ❑ Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
 - ❑ Pillows to elevate your upper body if your doctor says you'll need to rest in an upright position for a while
 - ❑ Stool softener in case the pain meds back you up
 - ❑ Thermometer to check for fever (a fever could indicate an infection)
 - ❑ Reading material, shows lined up on your Netflix watch list, whatever will keep you occupied
 - ❑ Some people get cute motivational socks, mugs, or t-shirts
 - ❑ Dry shampoo
 - ❑ At least a few days worth of healthy food
 - ❑ Tons of filtered or bottled water
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When You Have to Care for Children

Tips for Moms

Caring for infants and toddlers while trying to recover is tricky. You have restrictions (both by the doctor AND your body) on what you can lift. You might also be tired.

Our strong advice is to get help from friends, family, or a hired babysitter for at least the first few days after surgery. You won't be able to drive until you're off pain medication so you may also need to arrange alternative transportation to school, activities, daycare, etc.

It could take a few weeks, if not more, to resume your usual parental duties. A conversation with your partner or other adult about pitching in as needed could be useful ahead of time so everyone knows what to expect.

You may also have drains, and we don't need to tell you that little kids LOVE to pull on things they shouldn't! This can be seriously painful. We suggest pinning your drains inside your shirt where they can't be seen.

Interact on the floor. It's hard to avoid picking up your baby or toddler. But if possible, do as many activities as you can on the floor. Snuggles, meal times (make it a fun picnic!), playing, reading... you going down is easier than them coming up.

Have about two weeks of food planned ahead of time. Maybe that means cooking a few meals and freezing them, stocking up on extra pantry items, and/or assigning food prep to someone else like a partner or babysitter.



Unsure what to tell your children?

Ultimately, how you explain your surgery to your young ones has to be right for you and your family. From what other moms have said, though, being transparent with them in an age-appropriate way can have its advantages. Not only are you honest about your vulnerability and helping them develop empathy, they're also getting a wonderful lesson on the importance of caring for their own bodies.

What to do About Work?

Planning Time Off

When it comes to knowing how much time to take off from work, everyone's situation will be different. Here are some general things to consider, however::

- You likely won't be advised to, or physically able to, lift heavy things for at least six weeks. If you have a job that requires lifting, you'll probably need more time off than if you have a desk job.
- Jobs that require lifting your arms or standing for long periods of time, like hairdressing for example, could take some time to resume as well. You should also wait until you're 100% comfortable using sharp blades or machinery!
- Some people with desk jobs or work-from-home jobs resume work after a week or two. However, it's common to still feel a bit "off". Unexpected dizzy spells, exhaustion, lingering pain, or a foggy brain are examples of things that may require a little extra time away from work. The hard part is not knowing how you'll feel after surgery. So deciding the best course of action with your place of employment can get tricky.
- Flexibility and easing back in slowly to work is probably best if you have that luxury.



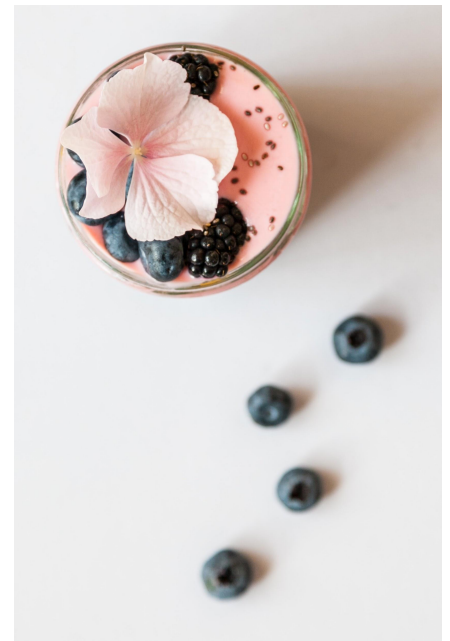
Whole Body Healing

What to Eat & Drink

Eating well before and after your surgery is important for your body to properly heal. If you're partial to processed convenience foods, now is a perfect time to reassess your diet. Everything else will be changing, so why not take a look at this too?

One diet does not fit all. If a certain type of diet works well for you, be it paleo, keto, vegan, flexitarian, raw, gluten-free, great! What's important is for your food to make you feel good and fit your budget. The key is to eat "real" food that's simple and relatively unprocessed. For example:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Unprocessed grains (like plain rice, oats, barley, etc.)
- Fresh meat and fish
- Eggs
- Legumes like beans and lentils
- Nuts and seeds
- Healthy fats like olives, coconut or avocados, or oils made from them
- Herbs and spices
- Good quality salt such as sea salt or pink Himalayan salt



★ TIP ★

Frozen fruit, vegetables, meat and fish are good options, too. They're often more economical and nutritious than their fresh counterparts. Why? Because they are usually frozen just after harvest so they retain more of their vitamins and minerals compared to fresh food that travels long distances only to sit on store shelves for days or weeks.

Food to Have on Hand

What you'll feel like eating post-op is anyone's guess. Your body will have just undergone a degree of trauma and needs to heal. You may have no appetite one minute, then be ravenous for something salty the next. Then you might take two bites of a salty snack and decide you want another type of food altogether. It's normal.

Here's what other women found crave-worthy and satisfying post-op:

- A favorite soup (ideally a homemade or healthy store-bought one)
- Fruit
- Coconut water (for hydration and electrolytes)
- Bread or toast of some kind
- Pink Himalayan salt
- A favorite protein. If you don't have anyone who can make it for you, you could prep some meals in advance and freeze it in small portions.
- Tons of water
- A healthy, or semi-healthy snack you love. Keeping your blood sugar stable is important.



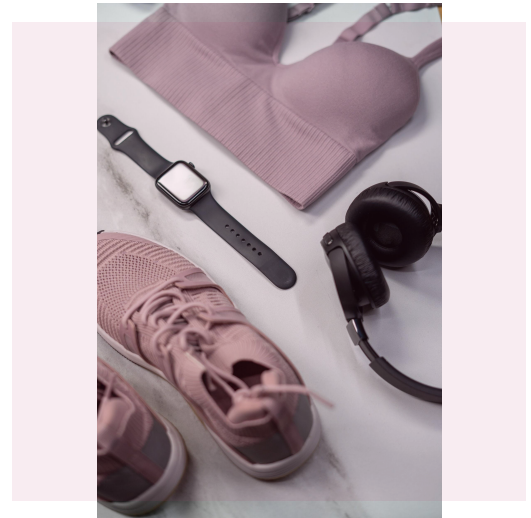
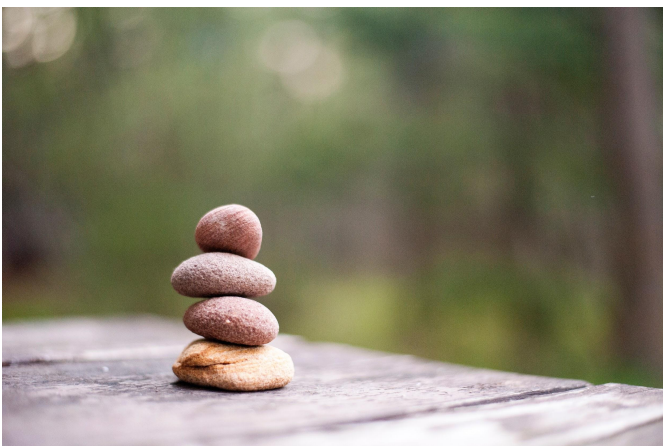
Movement & Mind

EXERCISE

If you have a well-established exercise routine, keep it up until surgery! You'll probably have to take a workout break post-op, but many women find they get back into the swing of things faster than expected. If you can't, that's ok too. Take your time and listen to your doctor's instructions about when it's safe to resume physical activity.

If you don't exercise on a regular basis, it will prep your body *and* your mind for optimal healing. Even 30-minute daily walks can make a world of difference.

★ Tip ★ Your core muscles will be your best friends (or your worst enemies!) as you recover. You'll rely on them when you can't use your arms to push yourself up from a reclined position. Try strengthening these muscles as best you can before surgery. You'll be glad you did!



MEDITATION

Now is a great time to cultivate the practice of sitting quietly and turning your attention inward. Surgery is stressful. The aftermath of surgery is stressful. The way your body looks and feels will change. It's a lot to deal with. Here's how meditation will help:

- You'll be able to tune into what's going on in your body. This means recognizing when things feel "off" and when they start to improve.
- When you quiet your mind down, the important things float to the surface. These include love for yourself, gratitude, fearlessness, and love for others.
- Studies show meditation reduces anxiety cortisol levels, and blood pressure.

A Few Final Tips

You're Almost Ready

You're well on your way to being as prepared as possible for your explant surgery. Just a few final reminders and to-do's:

- **ASSUME YOU'LL HAVE "PTERODACTYL ARMS".** You know that dinosaur with disproportionately small, useless arms? That could be you. Before surgery, move your most important things to a place you can easily access them. You may not be able to extend your arms for a while.
- **DO YOU HAVE A RIDE HOME?** Sometimes you don't get the exact time of your surgery until the evening before. However, you must have someone drive you home (not Uber).
- **BE A GOOD PATIENT.** Your doctor may have given you pre-op instructions that are, well, *inconvenient*. All surgeons have their own list of directives, so comparing yours to someone else's is kind of pointless. Someone you know may have been told to start taking vitamin C, while you were specifically told no supplements *at all*. No wine for two weeks prior to surgery? No smoking for a month? It's no fun, but your doctor is giving you these instructions for a reason. You're putting your life into his or her hands so following directions protects everyone.
- **BE A GOOD ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF.** This may seem to contradict the above, and sometimes it does. But if something doesn't seem right to you, point it out. Read everything you sign closely, make sure your questions are answered in a way you understand, and be 100% comfortable with what's about to happen. This applies to your recovery period, too.



You've Got This!



“The wound is the place where the Light enters you.”

~ Rumi
