

BIGGER BREASTS, SMALLER DOWNTIME

A 24-hour recovery is changing the face of breast augmentation surgery.

BY STACEY STEIN

If there's one anecdote that is sure to sell prospective patients on the benefits of the 24-hour-recovery breast augmentation procedure, this is it: Imagine having a boob job on a Friday and then lazing on a beach in Florida the very next morning. This is exactly what one patient did after getting the operation done by Dr. Mahmood Kara, MD, FRCSC, who has been performing the 24-hour-recovery breast augmentation procedure for the past 10 years.

WHAT IS IT?

Dr. John Tebbetts, MD, a plastic surgeon based in Dallas, developed the 24-hour-recovery breast augmentation surgery method in 2004. The method involves proper preoperative planning, using certain instruments and a special technique during the procedure, and a post-operative routine that "allows patients to be essentially pain-free and able to go out for dinner the night after surgery," according to Dr. Kara. Dr. Kara, who has offices in Toronto, Whitby and Oakville, trained with Dr. Tebbetts to learn the technique and says he was one of the first plastic surgeons to introduce the procedure in Canada.

The procedure involves a series of steps, beginning with selecting the right implant. There's also no bleeding during the procedure, thanks to the use of special cautery forceps – Dr. Kara coagulates the blood vessel before it bleeds. Other

instrumentation is also used to ensure that the process is atraumatic, causing minimal tissue injury.

"The surgical technique is a very precise and gentle dissection," says Dr. Kara.

POST-SURGERY ROUTINE

With traditional breast augmentation surgery, patients take time off work and refrain from their regular activities for several days while they recover. With the 24-hour-recovery method, patients are told to start moving right away and can return to their regular activities that evening or the next day.

Following surgery with the 24-hour-recovery method, doctors advise patients to perform arm exercises where they move their arms in what Dr. Kara describes as a "jumping jack fashion" – patients are supposed to do this five times every hour. Apart from intense work and heavy exercise, patients can do most things.

"It's back to their normal routines—they lie down for a couple of hours, have a shower and go out for dinner," says Dr. Kara. "Most of the time, all they need is Advil."

WHO IS A CANDIDATE FOR THIS?

According to Dr. Kara, anyone who is a candidate for traditional breast augmentation is also a candidate for the 24-hour-recovery method. The "ideal" patient is relatively healthy and maintains a healthy weight.

OTHER BENEFITS

Aside from the fast recovery time and absence of bleeding, the 24-hour-recovery breast augmentation has many advantages. With traditional breast augmentation surgery, patients need strong pain medication, such as Tylenol 3 or Percocet, but with the 24-hour-recovery method, patients typically only take ibuprofen for pain management.

Dr. Kara says patients liken the sensation following surgery to what it feels like "when their milk comes in" after giving birth. In other words, the pain is not acute and is very manageable. Patients also don't need drainage tubes or any dressings and typically don't experience any bruising.

Because of the anti-nausea medication given and the type of anaesthetic used (called TIVA), Dr. Kara says that, when the patient awakens, "It's like they've never even had any surgery." They typically don't feel nauseous and are out and about soon after the procedure.

POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS

With the 24-hour-recovery breast augmentation procedure, patients tend to have fewer post-operative problems, such as capsular contracture and bleeding or issues with the implant shifting, according to Dr. Kara.

"I've never experienced bleeding with this technique," he says, adding that any potential side effects are reduced. 

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

A direct comparison of the 24-hour-recovery method and traditional breast augmentation surgery

	 24-HOUR-RECOVERY METHOD	 TRADITIONAL SURGERY
SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS USED	Electrocautery forceps	An "L-shaped" breast dissector
TECHNIQUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissection without any trauma Instruments allow a precise and gentle dissection Blood vessels are sealed before they bleed No drainage tubes No dressings (patients go home in a sports bra) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blunt dissection resulting in bleeding and injury to the muscle and bones of the rib Instruments don't allow for precise dissection Blood vessels are not sealed before they bleed Patient may have drainage tubes Large dressings usually used
POST-OPERATIVE ROUTINE	Arm exercises performed frequently post-surgery	Arm movement limited for about two weeks
INCISION SITE	Under the breast	Usually under the breast
SIDE EFFECTS	Same as traditional breast augmentation surgery but significantly reduced	Capsular contracture, bleeding and moving or shifting of the implant
COST	Approximately \$8,000	Approximately \$8,000
RECOVERY TIME	24 hours	Approximately two weeks

PHOTOS: THINKSTOCK