

# Considering Reconstructive or Appearance Gynaecological Surgery

## Introduction:

**Take your time:** It is important to remember that undergoing surgery is a serious commitment and that no procedure is 100% risk free.

**Getting the timing right:** Unless the circumstances are exceptional surgery should be avoided if you have recently experienced a major life event such as moving house, changing job, losing a loved one, the break-up of a relationship or arrival of children.

**Be informed:** As with any type of surgery the decision to undergo reconstructive or appearance surgical procedures should not be undertaken lightly. Surgical procedures can change your appearance and function in ways you may not have considered. To help assist you in this initial decision we would recommend you work through and think about the questions and considerations detailed below as part of your first step before making a face to face consultation with your doctor.

## What are your reasons and expectations for considering surgery?

- ◆ If you are planning to go ahead and make an appointment for a face to face consultation with your doctor, it is important to be clear about what exactly your expectations of the surgical procedure are. This is so that the surgeon can give you the correct advice about whether the procedure will achieve the results you want. It is important to be truthful about any health or lifestyle issues your surgeon may ask you about as these could affect the results of your procedure.
  - Do you expect the surgery to change your life as well as your appearance?
  - How do you think your life will be better by having the surgery?
  - Is it reasonable or likely that a change in your appearance will radically change your life?
  - Are you considering surgery for yourself or to please someone else?
  - Do you think that by having surgery it will improve your relationship or employment prospects?
  - Is it reasonable to expect surgery to achieve the changes to your appearance that you are hoping for?

# Considering Needs and Expectations after Reconstructive or Appearance Gynaecological Surgery

## Introduction

**Talk to your Doctor:** During your pre-surgical consultation, your surgeon will thoroughly discuss with you your needs and expectations to ensure a customized surgical procedure that will best suite you. It is important that you are clear about your reasons for wanting to consider surgery and that you communicate these as well as your expectations with your doctor during your pre surgery consultation.

**Understand your procedure** Your doctor will provide you with details of the proposed procedure which will include how long it will take, what anaesthesia will be used, whether our require an overnight stay or not, level of pain you may experience including risks associated with anaesthetic, infection and scaring. If you do not understand an explanation, a medical term used or not exactly clear on what is being recommended or why, don't be afraid to ask. Doctors are used to being asked questions, so please do ask questions until you feel you understand and are clear about the proposed surgical procedure. It is important to keep asking questions until you feel you have all the information you need to make a decision about whether to proceed or not with the surgery.

**Be aware of after surgery care:** It is also important to be informed and ensure that you understand the limitations of risks of your planned procedure. As well as the surgical procedure itself your doctor will also discuss recovery time and aftercare procedures.

## What are your needs and expectations likely to be after surgery?

- ◆ The success of your procedure will depend on following the pre-surgery regime and the aftercare advice, so it is important to make sure that you understand the advice and that you are prepared and able to follow it. For example your surgeon may say to you that you need to spend a couple of nights in hospital and that you will need a week off work to rest.
- ◆ Any surgical procedure involving incisions will leave scars. These will be permanent and may be quite pronounced and inflamed at first but usually the scar tissue will subside and the redness will fade over time. This may happen over a period of weeks or it may take several months or even a year or so, depending on the location and extent of the incision(s). Your surgeon will discuss these issues at the time of your consultation and also aftercare advice. The following questions can be asked at the time of your pre-surgical consultation and may help you to be clear about your expectations and needs following your surgical procedure.
  - What type of care will I need after surgery?
  - Will I need pain relief following surgery?
  - Will I have swelling or bruising and can these be treated?
  - How long will the effects of treatment keep me away from my usual activities?
  - At what stage will I be able to judge the results of surgery?
  - How long do the results last?
  - If I need to see you in the period after surgery, will you be available?
  - What will happen if I am unhappy with any aspect of the surgical procedure?
  - When can I return to work?