

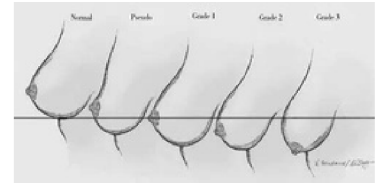
How to Select a Bra Following Surgery for Breast Cancer

Breast tissue sits on top of your pectoralis muscles; they are supported by skin and fascial/ligamentous connections. The bigger your breasts, the heavier they are, and the more they move with general daily activity and exercise. A well designed and fitted bra can change the way your breasts look and move.

The following information will help you find a properly fitted bra for comfort and support with activity.

Identify your breast shape:

1. **Pert:** round and sit upright
2. **Ptotic:** cylindrical and hang down
3. **Broad:** wide extending towards the armpit



Measure your bra size:

- ✓ Band size: measure around your chest (under breasts) in centimeters.
- ✓ Cup size: measure over the fullest part of your breasts.



Assess the fit:

1. Do the breasts feel lifted and slightly compressed against the chest?
 - a. The cup should fully contain the breast and mold to its shape, not allowing breast to hang.
 - b. The fabric should be strong, sturdy, and supportive. Seams should not rub or irritate the skin.
 - c. Sweat should be able to dry.
2. If your bra contains underwire, make sure it does not dig into your breasts and sits on the rib cage.
3. Shoulder straps should be firm, but not dig into the tissue.
4. The supportive band around your chest should:
 - a. not slide up and down with arm movement above your head.
 - b. not be too tight making it difficult to breathe.
 - c. support your breast weight (breasts should not drop > 1-2 cm sliding the strap off your shoulders).
 - d. be level at the front and the back.

Assess for support:

Run in place in the changing room and ask yourself the following questions:

- How much movement of the breast is occurring?
 - **The Breast Bounce - 0 - Meter** found at www.bra.edu.au can give you a visual assessment of how much your nipples are moving up and down.
- Is the bra comfortable? Rate it from 1-10.
- How much discomfort do you experience running/jumping in place? Rate it 1-10.



If it's not comfortable, don't buy it. Try another one.

Brands and suggestions

While some brands market products specifically for mastectomy or other breast surgery patients (examples: WearEase, Prairie Wear, Forme), what matters most are the bra's features. It should be comfortable and provide the right amount of support. Price is not always an indicator of quality and effectiveness. In some cases, a maternity bra with good coverage, soft materials, and a front opening may be a suitable alternative. This website is a wonderful resource for bra information and fit:

www.bra.edu.au