

Follow-up Visits After Deep Inferior Epigastric Perforator Flap (DIEP)

You are scheduled to have DIEP flap surgery to rebuild your breast. DIEP stands for deep inferior epigastric perforator, which is a blood vessel that runs through the belly.

The surgery consists of taking fat, skin, and blood vessels, but no muscle, from the wall of the lower belly and moving it to your chest to rebuild your breast. The blood vessels are carefully reattached to blood vessels in your chest using microsurgery.

What can I expect for the DIEP surgery?

- You will be in the hospital for at least 4 days.
- You will have 3 to 4 drains — 1 on each breast and 2 on your belly.
- You will wear an abdominal binder for 8 weeks after surgery.

1 to 2 weeks after going home from the hospital

- You will come in for a clinic visit so we can check your wounds.
- We will remove 1 drain from your breast and 1 drain from your belly as long as there is less than 25 ml of fluid draining per day for 2 days in a row.

1 to 2 weeks later

- You will come in for a clinic visit so we can remove any remaining drains.

4 to 5 weeks later

- You will come in for a clinic visit so we can check your wounds.
- We will talk with you about breast revision or nipple areola complex surgery that may be needed.

What can I expect after the nipple and areola complex surgery?

The nipple and areola complex are made using your own tissue and a skin graft. This surgery is done in an outpatient setting.

5 days after surgery

- You will come in for a clinic visit so we can remove the nipple bolster (this is a dressing that covers the new nipple).

2 weeks later

- You will come in for a clinic visit so we can check your wounds.

6 to 8 weeks later

- You will come in for a clinic visit for a final wound check.