

# Packing your hospital bag for risk-reducing surgery



Below is a suggested packing list for your hospital stay if you're undergoing risk-reducing surgery, such as:

- Single or double mastectomy with breast reconstruction or flat closure
- Gynaecological surgeries, including salpingectomy, oophorectomy, or hysterectomy

## Personal Care and Comfort Essentials

- Your medications and vitamins
- Throat lozenges

Personal hygiene items such as:

- Lip balm/chapstick (to restore moisture after surgery)
- Body wipes/facial wipes (for the first post-surgery days when mobility might be more limited.)
- Deodorant
- Body wash
- Dry shampoo (keeps your hair fresh and clean when you can't shower)
- Perfume and light make-up such as mascara and lip gloss to help you feel more refreshed
- Razor (avoid shaving right before and after surgery, as small cuts from shaving or waxing may increase the risk of infection)
- A lightweight drink bottle with a nozzle/straw (to drink lying down without spillage)
- Healthy snacks
- Mindfulness apps such as Smiling Mind and Headspace (to relieve anxiety and assist in recovery)
- Tea (if you enjoy tea and prefer flavours other than peppermint or black)
- A pillow for the seatbelt when travelling home in the car (for mastectomy)

## Entertainment and Communication Essentials

- Mobile phone/laptop/iPad/tablet
- Headphones
- Camera (if you want to document your surgery)
- Chargers for all devices (get extra-long cables to use devices comfortably in bed – a 2-metre+ cord is usually ideal)



- Notepad and pen (for journaling your experiences, jotting down questions for your surgeon, and keeping track of medications and symptoms)
- Books/magazines
- Two playlists with relaxing music/upbeat music

### Clothing Essentials

General tips: avoid clothing that is too tight or constricting, opt for clothing with zippers or buttons (zippers can be easier to manage with limited mobility and for wound/drain checks after mastectomy), and choose pants with pockets for added convenience.

Soft and comfortable clothes such as:

- Loose T-shirts (preferably button-up or zip-up for easy wound inspection after a mastectomy, convenient for managing drains or PICO dressings if applicable, and easier to wear with limited mobility)
- Jumper (zip or button-up for mastectomy)
- Dressing gown
- Tracksuit pants or sleeping shorts with pockets
- Slippers or slip-on shoes
- Wrap or large scarf (for when you are sitting in a chair or to put around your arms for warmth when you are sitting up in bed)
- Front zip-up or clip-up bras (convenient for breast checks and easier to put on with limited mobility)
- Bras one size up (for if breasts/body is swollen post-surgery)
- High-waisted undies (especially for those having DIEP surgery)
- Winter and summer pyjamas (temperature in the hospital can vary)

### Optional

These items are typically provided by the hospital, but you can bring your own if you prefer:

- Drain bags (for mastectomy)
- Hot water bottle or heat pack (for gynaecological surgeries; avoid using heat packs after a mastectomy as they can burn your skin without you realising)
- Your own pillows or a U-shaped pillow (you can also have your family bring them in later if needed)