

# Going Flat:

## How to Ask Your General Surgeon for an Aesthetic Flat Closure

I want an *aesthetic flat closure* (Fig. 1) - a smooth, flat chest wall contour. Please remove all redundant (aka extra) skin and fat to the greatest extent possible (Fig. 2,3). Please make any remaining tissue lie flat against my chest, and taper any discontinuities in the contour to maximize cosmesis.

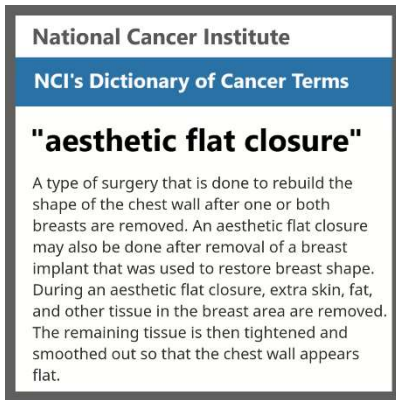
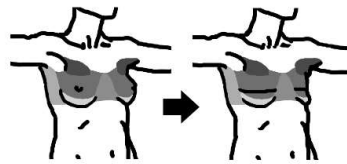


Figure 1



- Regions of Redundancy**
- Inframammary Fold
  - Lateral Chest
  - Center / Sternum
  - Anterior Breast
  - Armpit / Axilla

Figure 2

### Mastectomy patients who asked for a flat result:

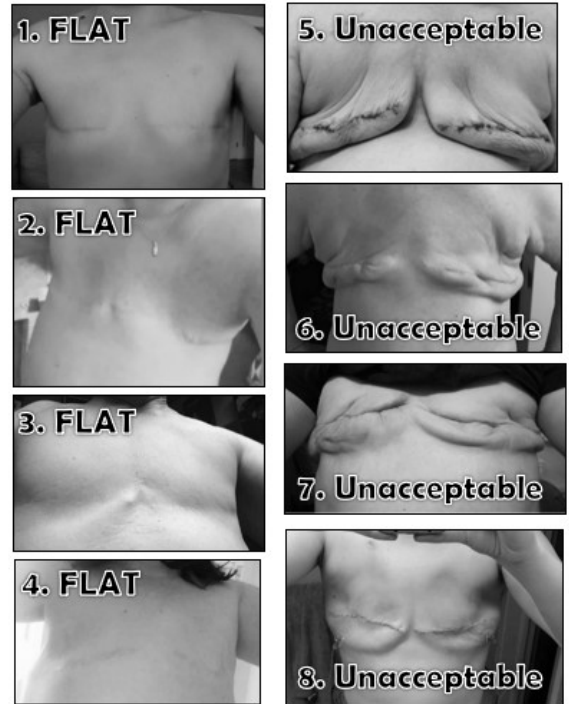


Figure 3

**Lateral chest redundant tissue:** In the interest of removing redundant lateral fat and skin, it's okay if the scar extends around my sides and further toward my back. Joining the scars at my sternum may be an option as I have no plans for breast mound reconstruction.

**Inframammary fold:** I want this landmark completely removed to produce a smooth, continuous flat contour. I do not want a "shelf."

**Scar pattern:** If a single, straight scar pattern will not yield a smooth, flat contour for my specific body, will you consider using a V-Y plasty, fishtail, or anchor incisions (Fig. 4)?

**Collarbone and Armpit:** Please contour and/or taper the tissues below the collarbone and adjacent to the armpit to produce a smooth contour whenever possible.

**Gravity:** To account for the pull of gravity, please mark up the surgical site while my torso is in an upright position. Note: I understand that some surgeons position the patient's arms across a bar to effectively excise large amounts of lateral redundant tissue. If this isn't possible, how will you address this issue?

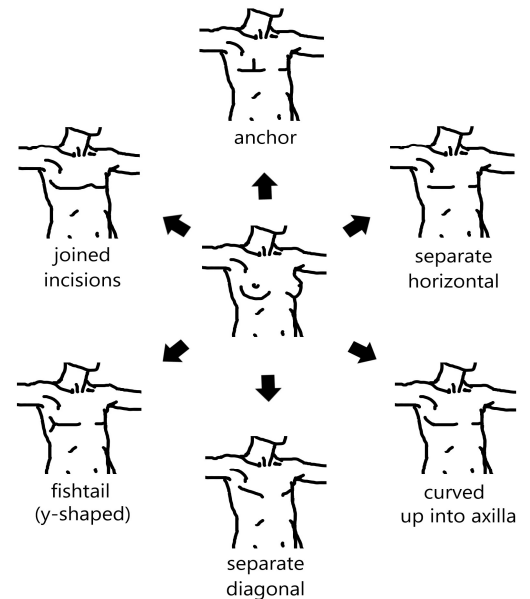
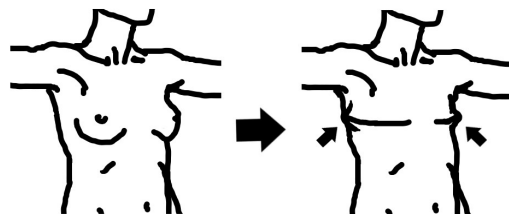


Figure 4 Incision Patterns

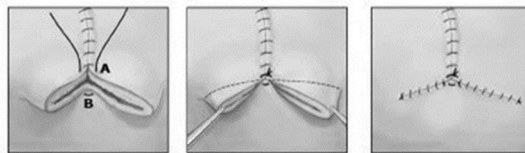
**Learn More:** *Not Putting on a Shirt.org*

**Dog ears:** I do not want dog ears left on my post-op chest or under my arms (Fig. 5). If you see a dog ear forming as you close, please excise the redundant skin (Fig. 6) and close it neatly, **even if that means extending the scar**.

**One and done:** To minimize time spent in recovery, my goal is to achieve a flat result in a single surgery. I accept that the contouring required to produce a flat result in my specific case may take extra time in the operating room during this surgery. If you don't think you can give me a flat result in one surgery, would you consider bringing on a plastic surgeon for the closure?



**Figure 5** Dog ears (peaks)



**Figure 6** Unanticipated dog ear repair (from ASBRS)

## CONSULT NOTES

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