

Fat Grafting — Know Your Options

Autologous Fat Transfer to the Breast & Face — Advantages, Disadvantages & What to Expect

An honest, balanced guide to help you make the right decision for you.

What is Fat Grafting?

Fat grafting — also called autologous fat transfer or lipofilling — is a procedure that takes your own fat from one part of your body (typically the abdomen, thighs, or flanks) and transfers it to another area where more volume is wanted. Because it uses your own tissue rather than any foreign material, it is one of the most natural enhancement options available.

The fat is removed using liposuction, then carefully processed and purified before being injected in small amounts into the target area. It is used in two main contexts that we help people access in India: breast enhancement and facial volumisation after a facelift.

It is important to go into this procedure with clear expectations. Fat grafting is not the same as implants — it offers a more subtle, natural result, but comes with its own set of advantages and limitations that are worth understanding fully before you decide.

Part One — Fat Grafting to the Breast

Fat grafting to the breast (sometimes called lipomodelling or natural breast augmentation) is a popular option for women who want a modest increase in volume or improved shape without the use of implants. It suits those looking for a natural feel and appearance, or those who want to correct asymmetry or restore volume lost after pregnancy or weight change.



Fat grafting to the breast is best suited for those wanting approximately one cup size of improvement. If you are looking for a more dramatic size increase, implants are likely to be the more effective option — and your surgeon will advise you honestly on this at consultation.

Advantages & Disadvantages

Prices are indicative only. All medical information is for general guidance — please consult your surgical team for personalised advice.

✓ Advantages	✗ Disadvantages
Completely natural — uses your own fat, no foreign material in the body	Modest results only — typically around one cup size at most; not suitable for significant augmentation
Dual benefit — liposuction slims the donor area (abdomen, thighs, flanks) at the same time	Fat reabsorption — the body reabsorbs a portion of transferred fat; on average only 50–70% of transferred fat survives long term
Softer, more natural look and feel compared to implants	Results are not fully predictable — fat survival varies between individuals and cannot be guaranteed
No implant-related risks — no capsular contracture, no rupture, no future implant replacement	A second procedure is commonly needed to achieve the desired volume after initial reabsorption settles
No visible implant rippling or edge visibility	Longer surgery — harvesting, processing, and injecting fat takes more theatre time than implant surgery
Suitable for women who have had implants removed and want to restore some volume naturally	Higher cost in New Zealand than implants, due to the extended surgical time and consumables required
Results that do survive are long-lasting — fat that integrates becomes a permanent part of your body	You must have sufficient donor fat available — very slim patients may not have enough to harvest
No allergy risk — your own tissue cannot be rejected	Not suitable for smokers — smoking significantly impairs fat cell survival after transfer

Risks

!	Fat reabsorption — a proportion of transferred fat will be reabsorbed by the body, sometimes unevenly, which can affect symmetry
!	Fat necrosis — transferred fat cells that do not establish a blood supply can die and form firm lumps (oil cysts or calcifications); reported in 2–18% of cases
!	Microcalcifications — areas of calcium can form and may show on mammograms; while these are distinguishable from cancer-related calcifications, they require monitoring
!	Infection at the harvest or injection sites
!	Contour irregularities at the liposuction donor site
!	Asymmetry — uneven fat survival between the two breasts may result in a size difference
!	Need for revision — a second or third session is commonly required to achieve and maintain the desired volume
!	Risks associated with anaesthesia — to be discussed fully with your anaesthetist

The Fat Survival Question — What to Expect Honestly

This is the most important thing to understand before choosing fat grafting over implants. Not all of the fat that is transferred will survive. The body reabsorbs a proportion of it — typically between 30% and 50% — as the transferred fat cells establish (or fail to establish) a new blood supply in their new location.

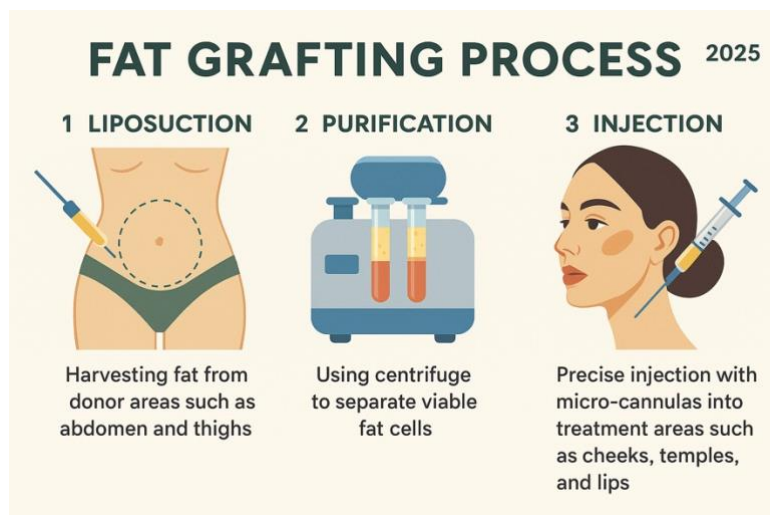
What this means in practice is that your surgeon will usually overfill slightly to account for expected reabsorption, and you will need to wait around three to six months before your final result is visible. If the result after that settling period is not quite what you hoped for, a top-up procedure is common and straightforward — provided you have sufficient donor fat remaining.

Fat that does survive and integrate becomes a permanent part of your breast tissue. It will behave as natural fat — it may increase or decrease slightly with significant weight changes, but it will not rupture, migrate, or need replacing the way an implant can.

Cost — India vs New Zealand

Cost Item	India (NZD approx.)	New Zealand (approx.)
Fat Grafting to Breast (autologous fat transfer)	~ \$5,900	~ \$18,000 – \$22,000
Pre-operative tests, scans & consultations	~ Included	~ \$500 – \$1,200
Anaesthetist fee	Included	~ \$1,500 – \$2,500
Hospital / facility fee	Included	~ \$2,500 – \$5,000
Post-operative garments & medications	~ \$100 – \$200	~ \$200 – \$500

NZ pricing is indicative based on publicly available surgeon fee schedules and varies significantly by surgeon and facility. India pricing is inclusive of surgeon, anaesthetist, and hospital fees. Airfares, accommodation, transfers, and JBTG logistics fees are additional.



Part Two — Fat Grafting to the Face

Facial fat grafting is commonly performed alongside a facelift to restore volume to the face at the same time as lifting and tightening the skin. A facelift addresses sagging and excess skin — but it does not restore the volume that the face naturally loses with age. Fat grafting fills that gap, literally.

As we age, fat pads in the face shrink and shift downward. The result is hollowing under the eyes, flattening of the cheeks, deepening of the lines around the mouth, and a general gauntness that can make a person look older or more tired than they feel. Fat grafting re-inflates these areas using your own tissue, creating a softer, more youthful appearance that complements the tightening effect of a facelift beautifully.

In India, facial fat grafting is included as part of the facelift procedure when performed together — making it exceptional value compared to having it done as a standalone procedure in New Zealand, where it is charged separately.



When fat grafting is performed alongside a facelift in India, it is included in the facelift package price. In New Zealand, facial fat grafting as a standalone procedure costs approximately \$7,000 — making the combined approach in India one of the most cost-effective options available.

Advantages & Disadvantages

✓ Advantages	✗ Disadvantages
Restores youthful volume lost to ageing — addresses hollowing that a facelift alone cannot fix	Fat reabsorption — as with breast fat grafting, a portion will be reabsorbed; final results take 3–6 months to settle
Uses your own fat — completely natural, no fillers or foreign material required	Results are not fully predictable — fat survival in the face varies and cannot be guaranteed

Long-lasting results — surviving fat integrates permanently, unlike dermal fillers which dissolve	Overcorrection is necessary — surgeons slightly overfill to account for expected reabsorption, which can look puffy initially
Dual benefit — donor site (usually abdomen or thighs) is slimmed at the same time	A top-up session may be needed if reabsorption is significant
Combines beautifully with a facelift for a comprehensive rejuvenation result	Swelling can be prolonged — facial fat grafting adds to the post-facelift recovery period
No risk of allergic reaction or filler migration	Not suitable for very slim patients who lack sufficient donor fat
Can treat multiple areas in one session — under eyes, cheeks, temples, lips, jawline	Lumpiness or irregularity can occur if fat is not injected evenly — technique is highly skill-dependent
Included in the facelift price when performed in India through JBTG	

Risks

!	Fat reabsorption — a proportion of the transferred fat will be reabsorbed, potentially unevenly across the face
!	Overcorrection and prolonged swelling — the face can look overly full for several weeks before settling
!	Fat necrosis — transferred fat that fails to establish a blood supply can form firm nodules under the skin
!	Asymmetry — uneven fat survival on each side of the face can affect symmetry
!	Infection at the injection or harvest sites
!	Contour irregularity or lumpiness — particularly if too much fat is injected into one area
!	Risks associated with anaesthesia — especially relevant when combined with a facelift

Cost — India vs New Zealand

Cost Item	India (NZD approx.)	New Zealand (approx.)
Facial Fat Grafting (standalone procedure)	Contact us for pricing	~ \$7,000
Facial Fat Grafting combined with Facelift	Included in facelift price	Charged separately (~\$7,000 additional)
Pre-operative tests, scans & consultations	~ \$300 – \$600	~ \$500 – \$1,200
Anaesthetist fee	Included	~ \$1,500 – \$2,500
Hospital / facility fee	Included	~ \$2,500 – \$5,000

Fat Grafting vs Implants — Which is Right for You?

If you're weighing up fat grafting against breast implants, here is a straightforward summary to help you think it through:

Consideration	Fat Grafting	Implants
Size increase possible	~1 cup size	1–3+ cup sizes
Feel	Natural — your own tissue	Very natural (silicone) to firmer (saline)
Foreign material	None	Silicone or saline implant
Results predictability	Variable — depends on fat survival	Highly predictable
Implant risks	None	Capsular contracture, rupture, replacement
Second procedure likely?	Commonly yes, for top-up	Rarely, unless complications
India cost (NZD approx.)	~ \$5,900	~ \$4,500 – \$7,000
NZ cost (approx.)	~ \$18,000 – \$22,000	~ \$14,000 – \$22,000
Longevity	Permanent (surviving fat)	10–20 years (implant dependent)



Neither option is better than the other — they are simply different tools for different goals. The best choice depends on how much volume you want, what your body is starting from, and what matters most to you in terms of feel, longevity, and risk profile. Your surgeon will guide you through this honestly at your consultation.

Insurance & Visa

Travel insurance is highly recommended for anyone travelling to India for surgery. Standard New Zealand travel insurance policies will not cover elective procedures, so it is important to arrange specialist medical travel cover before you go. We work with Global Protective Solutions, who offer insurance specifically designed for medical tourists. Their policy covers the procedure itself and any complications for up to six months after your procedure date, including care back home in New Zealand. Please note that this is not a standard travel insurance policy — it does not cover the other elements of your trip such as flights, luggage, or cancellations.

You can enrol directly through our dedicated link at www.globalprotectivesolutions.com/enroll/bumstumsgums. A visa is also required to enter India, and while we cannot apply on your behalf, we will guide you through the process and make sure you have everything you need well in advance of travel.

Ready to Find Out More?

Here's how to get started — it's simpler than you might think:

1	Get in touch Call or email us for a no-obligation chat. Tell us what you're hoping to achieve and we'll take it from there.
2	We connect you with our brokers in India Our trusted on-the-ground medical brokers will assess your needs and connect you with the right surgical team for your specific goals.
3	You receive a personalised quote The surgical team will provide a detailed quote based on your individual case. No surprises, no hidden costs.
4	We arrange everything Once you're happy to go ahead, we take care of flights, hotel, transfers, and all logistics. You just need to show up.
5	We travel with you You're not going alone. We escort you throughout the entire trip — to every appointment, every step of the way.

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