

Breast Augmentation

What is breast augmentation?

- Breast augmentation is a method of making the breasts larger by the insertion of an implant or prosthesis behind them.
- To operate on the normal breast is a big step which you need to think about carefully.
- The prosthesis is usually placed under the muscle. Occasionally it is placed behind the breast tissue and on top of the underlying muscle.
- This involves a general anaesthetic and an incision (cut) just under the breast in the skin crease.
- This scar is permanent, how obvious this looks is dependent on how well you heal.

What are the benefits of breast augmentation?

- This operation will increase the size of your bust, but no particular bra size can be guaranteed.
- We cannot guarantee that both breasts will be exactly the same size.

What happens if I do not have the treatment?

- If you decide not to have the procedure done your breasts will remain as they are.

What are the alternatives to breast augmentation?

- There is no alternative surgical treatment to make the breast larger.

What are the risks of breast augmentation?

- It is important to be aware of some of the short-term effects of breast implant surgery and the longer-term potential risks.

Short-term effects

- You are likely to have a small amount of swelling at first, with hardness and discomfort.
- Bruising, twinges and pains may continue for the first few weeks, although any symptoms that are causing concern, or cannot be explained, should be reported immediately to your surgeon.
- As with any operation Breast Augmentation carries a risk of infection and wound breakdown, this is more common in people who smoke

Warning symptoms include:

- Excessive swelling/deflated breast, offensive wound discharge, excessive pain or heat in breasts.
- Changes in breast sensation are common most are temporary, some are permanent.

What are the possible complications with breast augmentation?

Capsular contracture

- The human body puts a wall of scar tissue (fibrous capsule) around any implanted foreign material and breast implants are no exception.
- Scar tissue shrinks, but the extent of the shrinkage varies from person to person and even from breast to breast.
- This shrinkage, or capsular contracture, can be noticeable as an apparent hardening of the breast.
- This occurs in approximately 5 - 10% of patients.
- If severe it may cause pain and discomfort and alteration of the breast shape and further surgery may be required to correct this.

What are the rupture rates and life expectancy of the implants?

- 'Rupture' means the development of a split or a hole in the silicone shell of a breast implant.
- Rupture was common with early, thin-walled implants. It is not very common now.
- It is difficult to establish the rate of rupture because imaging can fail to detect ruptures or incorrectly identify intact implants as ruptured.
- It is estimated that current implants will last 10 - 15 years, but may last much longer.
- Routine scans are not required, but if a lump in the breast is detected, consult your doctor in the normal way.

Will I have scarring after the implants are inserted?

- The scars resulting from the insertion of breast implants are normally satisfactory.
- However, in a small number of women, (up to 1 in 20) as with any surgical procedure, scars will be red, or highly-coloured, thick, painful and will take several years before they improve.

How will the implanted breasts look and feel?

- The position of the breast may be unsatisfactory as a result of the implant and the shape of the breast tissue may be unpredictable.
- It may not always be possible to produce a natural cleavage and the implant will not drop to the side when the woman lies down.
- The breast will feel relatively firm and is not the same shape or consistency as the normal breast.
- How firm the breast feels is in part dependent on the type of silicone used. Often it is possible to feel the edge of the implant.

Creasing and folds

- The nature of the implant capsule may enhance less desirable characteristics such as creasing, kinking, vertical ripple folds and rippling in the breast.
- These are seen most frequently in women with little breast tissue.

Will the operation affect nipple sensation?

- Inserting the implants under the breast may result in permanent loss of nipple sensation in approximately one in seven women.

- Often the nipple sensation will be increased for a period of three to six months following surgery, which may be painful.
- Temporary nipple secretion may also occur.
- Breast feeding should not be a problem following this procedure.

Can breast implants become infected?

- Infection of cosmetic breast implants is rare, although more frequent after surgery for breast reconstruction following mastectomy.
- If infection occurs this will not settle with antibiotics alone and the implant will have to be removed.

Will there be any bleeding after the operation?

- Bleeding is uncommon but if bleeding does occur, you may require a further operation which is usually carried out shortly after the breast augmentation.

What anaesthetic will I be given?

(to be read in conjunction with General Anaesthetic information leaflet).

- You will be given a general anaesthetic. General anaesthesia is drug-induced unconsciousness.
- It is always provided by an anaesthetist, who is a doctor with specialist training.
- Unfortunately, general anaesthesia can cause side effects and complications. Side effects are common, but are usually short-lived: they include nausea, confusion and pain.
- Complications are rare, but can cause lasting injury: they include awareness, paralysis and death.

- The risks of anaesthesia and surgery are lower for those who are undergoing minor surgery, and who are young, fit, active and well.
- You will be given an opportunity to discuss anaesthetic options and risks with an anaesthetist before your surgery.

If you are worried about any of these risks, please speak to your Consultant or a member of their team.

Getting ready for your operation

- You will usually be seen in the pre-operative clinic. Here you will have blood tests, possibly a chest x-ray, and sometimes a heart trace.
- Please bring a non-wired support bra with you to wear after your operation.

What should I expect on the day of my operation?

- You will usually come into hospital on the day of your operation.
- The staff will ask routine questions about your health, the medicine you take at the moment and any allergies you may have.
- You will be asked to sign a consent form to say that you understand the procedure, and what the operation involves.
- Again, you will be able to discuss the operation with your surgeon.

What should I expect after my operation?

- When you return to the ward you may have a drain coming from your wound; this is to drain fluid from around your prosthesis.

- The tube will be removed as soon as the fluid drainage has reduced.

A nurse will check your pulse, blood pressure, breathing rate and wound regularly.

It is important that if you feel any pain you must tell the nursing staff, who can give you painkillers to help.

The nursing staff will also advise you when you can start taking sips of water.

- Anaesthetics can make some people sick. If you feel sick we advise you not to drink until this feeling has passed.
- The nursing staff may offer an injection to help this sick feeling go away.
- There is usually some swelling and bruising of the breast and surrounding tissue, but this will eventually settle.

The first time you get out of bed, please make sure you ask a nurse to be with you as you may feel dizzy.

When will I be able to go home?

- You may be able to go home on the same day as your operation (day case) or you may need to stay in hospital overnight.
- You will need to arrange for someone to drive you home. If you go home the same day as your operation, try to have a friend or relative stay with you for the first 24 hours.
- General anaesthesia temporarily affects your co-ordination and reasoning skill, so you must not drive, drink alcohol, operate machinery or sign any legal documents for 24 hours.
- If you are in any doubt about driving, contact your motor insurer so that you are aware of their recommendations and always follow your Surgeon's advice.

Will I be given any pain relief and medication?

- The nursing staff will advise you about painkillers before you leave the hospital.
- Please tell the nurses what painkilling tablets you have at home.
- When you go home, you may need to take some painkillers for a few days.
- If you get any severe pain or feelings you are worried about, please contact the ward as soon as possible.

Your wound

- You will have some wide tape at the side of your breasts. Please keep this tape in place for the first week.

Your bra

- Please wear a non wired support bra night and day for the first two weeks.

Getting back to normal

- After any operation it is normal to feel tired and it may take a couple of weeks for you to fully recover from the breast augmentation.

Returning to work

- As with any surgical operation, you may need to take some time off work and you will be given advice on returning to work.
- You can self-certify for the first seven days of sickness.
- After this time, a medical certificate (sick note) may be issued by your hospital doctor to cover the expected time off you will need after being discharged.

Will I have any follow-up appointments?

- Your Consultant will see you six weeks after your operation.

- If you have any problems before or after you are seen, please contact the Breast Care Unit for an appointment.

Further information:

- If you require any further information regarding breast augmentation then please contact:

Acknowledgements:

This leaflet is based upon the Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospitals NHS Trust patient information booklet 'Bilateral Breast Augmentation'.

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If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print, Braille, on audio tape or disk and in other languages on request. Please contact:

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