

What You Must Know Before Getting Breast Implants

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A breast implant is a prosthesis used to enlarge the size of a woman's breasts (known as breast augmentation, breast enlargement or augmentation mammoplasty) for cosmetic reasons; to reconstruct the breast (e.g. after a mastectomy; or to correct genetic deformities). According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, breast augmentation is the most commonly performed cosmetic surgical procedure in the United States. In 2006, 329,000 breast augmentation procedures were performed.

There are two types of breast implants: saline filled and silicone gel filled implants. Saline implants have a silicone shell filled with sterile saline liquid. Silicone gel implants have a silicone shell filled with a viscous silicone gel. Another consideration is the shape of the implant. tear drop shaped versus round. Tear drop implants have more fullness at the bottom and are flatter on top. These implants also only come with a textured surface which can make the breasts feel firmer after surgery. Round implants can be textured or smooth. Your surgeon will recommend the size and style of implant this is best for you.

There are many things to consider before actually undergoing breast augmentation. These include, but are not limited to, location of incision, location of the implant, and type of implant. Typically, the incision is placed in the fold underneath the breast. This allows the surgeon to have the most control for positioning the implant and afterwards the scar is well hidden. The other options are placing the incision around the nipple or in the armpits. The risks and benefits of each approach can be discussed with your surgeon to decide which option is best for you.

The implants can be placed above or below the pectoralis muscle. Many feel placing the implant above the muscle achieves the most aesthetic results. The other option is to place the implant under the muscle. This is the most common technique in North America, in that it achieves maximal upper implant coverage. Additionally, it is believed that this technique has a lower rate of capsular contracture (when the capsule tightens and squeezes the implant). This contracture is a complication that can be very painful and distort the appearance of the implanted breast.

Up until recently (November 17, 2006) silicone implants had been restricted by the FDA. During their 14 year restriction the FDA concluded that silicone gel implants are not associated with any underlying diseases. For women with very little breast tissue, or for post-mastectomy reconstruction, plastic surgeons believe that silicone gel implants are the superior device. In patients with more breast tissue, however, saline implants can look very similar to silicone gel. It is agreed that saline implants are more likely to cause cosmetic problems such as rippling, wrinkling, and be noticeable to the eye or the touch.

Each option should be discussed with your doctor. Specific recommendations may be made based on your individual needs and goals.

Women must also be aware that there is some recovery time. The average time away from work is about 5-7 days. Some people may require more or less time depending on the degree of physical activity and heavy lifting that they perform. It is recommended to avoid heavy lifting for four to six weeks to allow for proper healing. This includes exercising. After the six week post operative period you may resume your normal exercise regime. Wearing a supportive sports bra is recommended during exercise.

Another, less common, option to enhance the breasts is to transfer fat to them from a different part of the body. The longevity of this procedure has proven unreliable for the long term and can not result in significant enhancement. Fat transfer is not a good alternative to breast augmentation with implants.

Some common myths of breast implants include the prevention of having a mammogram, breast implants cause cancer, necessary implant replacement in ten years, and inability to breast feed post-operatively. Having saline or silicone breast implants does not increase your risk of developing breast cancer. Screening for breast cancer including monthly self breast exams, mammograms, and annual examination by your health care provider are recommended. Always inform the mammography technician that you have breast implants prior to the test.

There is no need to replace implants unless there is a problem, such as implant rupture or capsular contracture. Additionally, breast implants do not affect the natural changes of the breast that occur during pregnancy. It is possible to breast feed after having breast augmentation. There is potential of breast sagging or deflation (involution) after breast enlargement and breast feeding. Much depends on the anatomy's predisposition to stretching and sagging.

This article is owned by [Birmingham Cosmetic Surgery](#), a [Michigan Cosmetic Surgery](#) provider, offers [Michigan Breast Implants](#) consultations, information and surgery. They can be reached at (248) 723-9370.