

Breast Enhancement (augmentation)

This is an operation that is used to surgically enhance the size and shape of the breast. The operation is performed under general anaesthesia and the entire procedure takes about 2 hours. Recovery is variable, but as a general guide, women who have office type jobs are usually back to work after two weeks, but those with more manual jobs can take up to four weeks.

When you wake up after the operation you will have a drain under your arm (which will leave a small scar). This is to drain any blood or fluid that may collect there after surgery. You will have a support over your breasts in the form of a hospital binder (a special support bandage) or you will have a sports bra with an overlying Velcro Supportive Elastic Binder.

You are usually able to get up and walk around the room later on the same day as your operation. The following day the drain is removed and you are usually able to go home, sometimes day case surgery is available. I recommend that you wear a binder for the first week after your operation. You are allowed to remove it and shower. It is important that you wear a supportive bra during the day and at night for the first six weeks after your operation. The ideal type of bra is a sports bra. By supporting the breast, the infra-mammory fold which is disturbed or re-set at the time of surgery is reformed. The operation scar is placed on the underside of the breast and it is about 5-6cms long. Most patients have a good scar, although there is a small risk of thickening around the scar line (hypertrophic scarring). Following surgery there is an alteration to the sensation of the breast and nipple. In most patients this returns to normal in about three months, but in some patients (about 10%) they may remain permanently, under or over sensitive on one or both sides.

The commonest complication with this operation is bleeding within the wound, which causes a haematoma (collection of blood under the skin). This needs to be dealt with by returning to theatre to have the collection of blood removed. This may delay your discharge from hospital. Infection of the wound site or infection spreading to the implants is rare, it happens in around 2 % of cases. This however is much more serious and it requires the removal of the breast implant, sometimes both of them and new implants cannot be replaced for several months. This also carries the extra cost of purchasing new implants. I select implants from reputable manufacturers in good faith. I take no liability for manufacturing defects that may lead to subsequent surgery and cost.

The main long term complication is capsule formation, 10% of patients develop some form of noticeable capsule formation. This is when the tissue forms a tough layer around the implant. Sometimes these can cause deformity to the implant and it will eventually cause discomfort. A further operation to divide the capsule or to replace the implant may help, but I believe that if this happens twice, I would recommend that the implant be removed. Sometimes we can move the position of the implant to another plane, for example we can place implants that were previously on top of the muscle to under the muscle or vice-versa, to try and avoid continued capsular formation.

Mammograms are possible after breast augmentation surgery. You should always inform the radiographer that you have implants and they will then adjust the way that they take the x-rays. There is no evidence that having breast implants delays the detection of breast lumps and the routine advice about self examination is still as important after breast augmentation. Leakage of the contents of the implants may occur. In the case of silicone implants, the first the patient is aware of a leakage may be finding a lump on the breast or in the axilla (armpit). You would need to see your GP and patients may be referred to hospital.

- **We would ask you not to take any herbal or over the counter medicines prior to having a surgical procedure. Many Homeopathic chemists advocate Arnica before surgery, however this is quite harmful as it causes more bleeding during surgery. You will be given antibiotics during your surgery.**
- **Do remember that if you are using an oral contraceptive, this will be less effective as a result of taking antibiotics, especially oral ones and you will need an alternative form of contraception whilst taking the antibiotics and for seven days afterwards.**

For further information: www.silicone-review.gov.uk
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