

Breast augmentation

Breast reconstruction



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The logo for Yeovil Hospital Healthcare, featuring a stylized 'Y' inside a circle with a rainbow-colored border.
Yeovil Hospital
Healthcare

What is breast augmentation?

Breast augmentation is a method of making the breasts larger by the insertion of an implant.

To operate on the normal breast is a big decision, which you need to think about carefully.

The implant is usually placed behind the breast tissue and on top of the underlying muscle, occasionally it is placed under the muscle. This involves a general anaesthetic and an incision just under the breast in the skin crease.

This scar is permanent, how obvious this looks is dependent on how well you heal. The operation will increase the size of your bust, but no particular bra size can be guaranteed. Nor can we guarantee that both breasts will be exactly the same size.

Some 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.

Warning symptoms include:

- Excessive swelling
- Deflated breast
- Offensive wound discharge
- Excessive pain
- Heat in breasts

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 is known as capsular contracture.

This shrinkage, or capsular contracture, can be noticeable as an apparent hardening of the breast. This occurs in approximately five to ten per cent of patients. If severe it may cause pain, discomfort and alteration of the breast shape. Further surgery may be required to correct this.

Rupture rates and life expectancy of implants

“Rupture” means the development of a spill or 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 estimated that current implants will last between ten and 15 years, but may last much longer. Routine scans are not required, but if a lump in the breast is detected, consult your GP in the normal way.

Scarring

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

Appearance of the implanted breasts

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 and large implants.

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.

Infection

Infection of cosmetic breast implants is rare. If infection occurs this will not settle with antibiotics alone and the implant will have to be removed.

Bleeding

Is uncommon, but occurs occasionally and may require further surgery usually shortly after the initial operation.

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. You will be asked about your past medical history and any medication you are taking.

The day of your operation

You will usually come into hospital on the day of your operation. You will be asked to sign a consent form to say that you understand the procedure, and what the operation involves. you will see the surgeon and the anaesthetist prior to going to theatre.

Going home

You will usually be in hospital overnight, and go home the day after your operation.

Discharge information

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.

Your wound

You will have dressing over your wound. Please keep this in place for the first week. The dressing will be removed when you see the surgeon.

Your bra

Please wear an elasticated, crop type sports bra night and day for the first four to six weeks.

Getting back to normal

After any operation it may take weeks to fully recover. It is normal to feel more tired than usual for a few weeks after having an operation. This will pass.

Returning to work

As with any surgical operation, you may expect to need to take some time off, depending on the surgical procedure. You can self-certify for the first seven days of sickness. After this, a medical certificate may be issued by your GP to cover the expected time off you will need.

Contact information

Breast care nurses

01935 384 352

You can use the following space for any notes or questions you may have

If you would like this leaflet in another format or in a different language, please ask a member of staff.

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