

BREAST AUGMENTATION

(BREAST IMPLANTS)

Background

Breast augmentation (breast enhancement) is a surgical procedure which aims to increase the size and shape of the breasts. It is the commonest cosmetic surgical procedure performed in the world and is associated with a high degree of patient satisfaction. It can be performed in girls with small breasts who want to go bigger, in mothers who feel as though they have lost volume after children or to correct breast asymmetry. It is also commonly performed in association with breast uplift surgery or other cosmetic procedures.

The treatment

The procedure involves the placement of a silicone implant either behind the breast tissue (subglandular) or under the chest wall (pectoral) muscle; this is known as a submuscular or dual plane pocket. The insertion of an implant will push or help lift the breast tissue forward, making the breast appear larger and more full. It is performed under a general anaesthetic and usually involves an overnight stay.

The benefits

Of all the cosmetic procedures, this operation aims to increase the size of the breasts and has one of the highest patient satisfaction ratings. However, there are limitations – for instance in very slim ladies with small breasts and thin skin the implant may be palpable (especially underneath); preexisting asymmetries in size or nipple position may be exaggerated; ladies with a wide breast bone (sternum) will always have a wide cleavage (even though the breasts will be larger). Lastly it should be noted that it is likely your implants will need to be changed at some time in the future and this will incur further expense.

Duration of Surgery

The surgery takes 1-1.5 hours. Drains are usually inserted on each side, and these will normally stay in for 1 day

Complications of Surgery

Unfortunately complications can occur following any surgery and patients need to be fully aware of this. Mr Banwell does his utmost to minimise the complication rate and likes to practise in a safe manner. The commonest complications are scarring, bleeding, haematoma formation and the need to return to theatre, infection, removal of implants, numbness, alteration in nipple sensation, asymmetry in the healing and the final result, palpability, visibility, rippling, clots in the legs and lungs and lastly capsular contracture; this is abnormal hardening of the breast that can also lead to pain and a change in shape of the breast

After Surgery

The recovery will vary from patient to patient. Mr Banwell recommends you commence wearing a sports bra immediately after your drains are removed and you should continue wearing this day and night for 8 weeks. After the surgery the wounds will be dressed with brown micropore tape which is waterproof. You will be able to shower the day after leaving hospital after which you can pat the tape dry with a towel and then use a hair-dryer on a warm setting to ensure the tape is completely dry. You will normally be able to return to work after 2 weeks depending upon how you feel.

Recovery

In the first week following surgery you should take things very easy. The following week you will find you can do much more and may be ready to return to work. You should avoid lifting and carrying for 2 weeks following surgery and strenuous exercise/physical activity should be avoided for 6 weeks following the surgery to prevent damage to your breasts and their new implants. Many patients find gentle cardiovascular exercises are fine after a few weeks. You can drive when you feel safe to perform an emergency stop otherwise your insurance company may invalidate your insurance.

Success and satisfaction

The operation has an extremely high success rate. However, an abnormal thickened capsule (capsular contracture) can occur

Important Notice

Mr Banwell strongly advises you stop smoking prior to surgery as this can affect the outcome of surgery and increase complication rates. Nutritional supplements, anticoagulant medication and blood thinners (eg. aspirin and brufen) all increase the risk of bleeding and should be stopped prior to surgery unless otherwise instructed.

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NOTES & QUESTIONS

AT A GLANCE

SURGERY TIME

1-1.5 hours

HOSPITAL STAY

Day case or 1 night

ANAESTHETIC ASSESSMENT

No

PRE ADMISSION TESTS

Possibly

SLEEPING POSITION

Sleeping on back recommended for 4 weeks.

REASONABLY MOBILE

1 day

WASHING

Shower after 1 day. Bath after 2 weeks.

DRIVING

2 weeks

EXERCISE INCLUDING GYM

4-6 weeks

SEXUAL ACTIVITY

Restricted activity after 4 weeks

FULL RECOVERY

4-6 weeks

TIME OFF WORK

2 weeks

BRAS & GARMENTS

Sports bra worn for 8 weeks. Wired bra after 2 months.