

EXCHANGE OF IMPLANTS

Introduction

Breast augmentation (breast enlargement) is one of the most popular plastic surgery procedures available today for a multitude of good reasons. The surgery is safe, predictable, and can produce significant changes in a woman's appearance almost instantaneously. Patient satisfaction is extremely high due to improved self-confidence, a more aesthetic and proportionate body contour, and better fitting clothing. Every year more and more women elect to undergo this surgery, often after seeing excellent results in friends or relatives.

However, one common misconception of women considering breast augmentation is that once the implants are placed, they stay in permanently. Although there certainly are women who have had the same implants for many decades, most women will have their implants exchanged within the first ten to fifteen years after surgery for various reasons. This implant exchange procedure is generally much easier and less invasive than the original surgery, since the pocket for the breast implant already exists.

Change in size

One of the most frequent reasons for implant removal and replacement is the woman's desire to change the size of the implants. The majority of women who have breast augmentation surgery are extremely happy with their new size. Some women, however, decide later on that they would be happier with a change in cup size. In such cases, these women elect to have their implants removed and replaced with larger or smaller implants.

This surgery is usually quite straight forward but may involve changing the pocket and performing a capsulotomy (incision of the breast capsule).

Capsular Contracture

Some patients may get capsular contracture following their breast augmentation which is always discussed by Mr Banwell at the time of consultation. In such cases, the capsule needs to be removed (capsulectomy) and the breast implants replaced. Sometimes, in discussion with the patient, Mr Banwell may perform uplift surgery at the same time.

Breast Implant Rippling

Unfortunately implant rippling is not uncommon especially in slim ladies with a thin breast skin envelope. Placing the breast implant (prosthesis) under the muscle may help minimise this but it can still occur regardless. This is sometimes difficult to correct but replacing the implants with a more cohesive gel prosthesis may be helpful and Mr Banwell would be delighted to discuss this with you at consultation.

Duration of surgery?

The operation itself takes 1-2 hours.

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. These include scarring, adverse scarring, bleeding, haematoma and return to theatre, wound infection or sometimes infection around the implant – which may necessitate temporary removal. Other problems include numbness, alteration in nipple sensation, asymmetry, clots in the legs or lungs, palpability, rippling or visibility of the implant. Capsular contracture is an important later complication to be aware of too - this refers to abnormal constriction of the naturally-forming scar tissue (capsule) around the implant that may cause hardening of the breast, a change in the shape of the breast or cause discomfort - if this is going to happen, this usually happens within the first 1-2 years. This would necessitate further surgery to replace the implant and release or remove the abnormal scar tissue (capsulectomy and replacement implant).

After Surgery?

Drainage tubes will be inserted into your breasts at the time of surgery and these are usually removed the following day. All the sutures are dissolvable and after the surgery the wounds will be dressed with brown micropore tape. This is shower-proof and you will therefore be able to shower from the day after surgery after which you can pat the tape dry, followed by a hairdryer on a warm setting to dry the tape completely. As will be discussed in clinic, Mr Banwell recommends wearing a supportive sports bra day and night for 8 weeks.

Recovery?

You should take 2 weeks off work although some patients may be ready to return to a desk job after a week. It is important to avoid heavy lifting and contact sports for 6-weeks following the surgery. You will be able to drive after 2 weeks.

Success and satisfaction?

Breast augmentation with exchange of implants has an extremely high success rate with few serious complications.

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

3 weeks

EXERCISE INCLUDING GYM

8 weeks

SEXUAL ACTIVITY

Restricted activity after 4 weeks

FULL RECOVERY

8 weeks

TIME OFF WORK

2 weeks

BRAS & GARMENTS

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