Breast Implant Information

Reasons for having breast implants

- Dissatisfaction with style and shape of breasts
- Congenital absence or deformity
- Asymmetry

It is important to have realistic expectations about the outcome. You need to discuss this in detail with your surgeon along with the choice of implant available, the operation, short and long term effects and risks.

Generally

- Implants do not interfere with the ability to breast feed
- There is no good evidence that implants increase the risk of developing breast cancer
- Mammography may be difficult
- Travel - air travel does not affect them

There has been a lot of publicity regarding the safety of breast implants. PIP (Poly Implant Prothese) implants have a higher rate of rupture than most other types of silicone implants. However, all implants can rupture (break) and then leak over time. However, there is no scientific evidence that ruptured silicone breast implants cause serious, long-term health problems, such as cancer or connective tissue disease.

What are the symptoms of leaking implants?

- Hard knots or lumps surrounding the implant or in the armpit
- Change or distorted breast shape
- Softening or hardening of the breast
These are sometimes accompanied by persisting burning pain in the affected breast (different from benign breast tenderness).

**Are there tests to check if an implant is leaking?**

- An MRI scan is the only reliable test. It is available on the NHS for this purpose, but only with special funding.

- Ultrasound cannot check the implant itself. It can be used in some cases to determine whether a lump is caused by a leak, a fold in an implant or some other breast problem. A normal ultrasound does not mean an implant is okay.

**If implants are removed, what will the unfilled breasts be like?**

When implants are put under the breast to make them appear larger, the skin is stretched and the normal breast fat thins. After removal, the breasts will have less volume than before. The skin stretching will make them appear saggy and the nipples may point downwards. The NHS will only remove implants, it will not replace them (unless they were used in breast reconstruction). It will not pay for operations to correct the appearance of the breasts unless following surgery.

**Should implants be removed?**

Intact implants do not need to be removed, even if they are PIP implants. Ruptured implants should be removed as they will cause increasing deformity to the breast.

The NHS will only remove implants, it will not replace them, unless they were used in breast reconstruction. It will not pay for operations to correct the appearance of the breasts.

- Further information available from:
  - MHRA - www.mhra.gov.uk
  - BAAPS - www.baaps.org.uk
  - BAPRAS - www.bapras.org.uk
  - Breast Cancer Care - www.breastcancercare.org.uk

If you have any concerns please contact:
Breast Care Nursing Team

Telephone: 01284 713281 Monday - Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm

Donations in support of our work may be made to the West Suffolk Hospital Breast Cancer Fund

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the disabledgo website link below:

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