

Frequently Asked Questions

ABOUT BREAST IMPLANTS



the power to transform[®]



MENTOR



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What is silicone?

Silicone Material

Silicone is derived from silicon, a semi-metallic or metal-like element that in nature combines with oxygen to form silicon dioxide, or silica. Beach sand, crystals, and quartz are silica. Silica is the most common substance on earth. Heating silica with carbon at a high temperature can produce silicon. Further processing can convert the silicon into a long chemical chain, or polymer, called silicone - which can be a liquid, a gel, or a rubbery substance. Various silicones are used in lubricants and oils, as well as in silicone rubber. Silicone can be found in many common household items, such as polishes, suntan and hand lotion, antiperspirants, soaps, processed foods, waterproof coatings, and chewing gum.

Are silicone implants safe?

Safety of Silicone

Special studies have been done and have determined that much higher levels of silicone have been found in cows' milk and commercially available infant formula than are found in the breast milk of women with implants. The Institute of Medicine concluded that *"There is no evidence that silicone implants are responsible for any major diseases of the whole body. Women are exposed to silicone constantly in their daily lives."*

For more information regarding the safety of silicone please refer to the Institute of Medicine Report (IOM) at: www.nap.edu.



What is Capsular Contracture?

Capsular Contracture

The scar tissue or capsule that normally forms around the implant may tighten and squeeze the implant and is called capsular contracture. Capsular contracture is more common following infection, hematoma, and seroma. It is also more common with subglandular placement. Symptoms range from firmness and mild discomfort, to pain, distortion, palpability of the implant, and/or displacement of the implant. Additional surgery is needed in cases where pain and/or firmness is severe. This surgery ranges from removal of the implant capsule tissue to removal and possibly replacement of the implant itself. Capsular contracture may happen again after these additional surgeries. You should be aware that closed capsulotomy, the practice of forcible squeezing or pressing on the fibrous capsule around the implant to break the scar capsule, is not recommended, as this may result in breakage of the implant.

Why Does the Body Form a Capsule Around the Implant?

As a natural reaction to any device placed in the body, scar tissue will form around the breast implant surface creating a capsule.

Do implants influence the occurrence of breast cancer?

Breast Cancer

No studies have ever shown this to be a concern for humans. There is no evidence that implants cause cancer.



How do breast implants affect mammography?

Mammography

Breast implants may interfere with finding breast cancer during mammography and may make mammography more difficult. It is important that you tell your mammography technologist that you have an implant before the procedure. Special displacement techniques and additional views may be required. Discuss any family history of breast cancer with your doctor.

Is it possible to get a silicone allergy?

Silicone Allergy

It is possible for anyone to develop an allergy to almost any substance on earth, however silicone allergies are very rare. We are all exposed to silicone in our environment everyday. It is found in many household items, such as polishes, suntan and hand lotion, antiperspirants, soaps, processed foods, waterproof coatings, and chewing gum.

What is the average life expectancy of an implant?

Implant Life Expectancy

Implants are not lifetime devices; therefore it is likely that they may need to be replaced sometime in your life. The time period varies from woman to woman. Some women need replacement surgery in only a few years while others may go 10-20 years. There are several different reasons why a woman might need replacement surgery. Sometimes it is a matter of choice, such as a



size change or an implant style change, and sometimes removal and replacement is necessary because of a complication, such as deflation, or shifting of the implant.

How long should I wait to resume exercise and other strenuous activities after implant surgery?

Recovery / Activities / Exercise

Your doctor will be your best guide regarding how long you will need to remain off work and will advise you when and how to resume activities. Recovery periods vary from woman to woman. Generally the first few days are the most uncomfortable. The average time to return to full activities is four to six weeks.

It is important not to sweat into the incision while it is healing. Therefore curtail activity and sun tanning until after the incision is healed and sealed. Don't over-do activity, especially of the upper body, too early. Let your body rest and heal. You want to minimize swelling around the implant.

Going into a Jacuzzi or bath after a month is usually ok. During the early time, one to two weeks following surgery, you don't want to soak the incision.

Be sure you check with your doctor before returning to your workouts. Patients vary greatly in recovery times. Walking is generally recommended to encourage circulation. The larger the implant you receive the heavier the breasts will be. You should wear good support bras while running to minimize pull on the skin and ptosis (drooping) of the breast.



Can I go to a tanning salon or sunbathe if I have implants?

Tanning Salon / Sunbathing

Tanning at salons or sunbathing will not hurt the implant but may make the scars worse. You should avoid getting sun or tanning rays on the incisions for at least one year after surgery as tanning rays will turn the incisions dark permanently. The implant may feel warm and may take longer to cool down than your body.

When can I fly and/or scuba dive?

Flying / Scuba Diving

Many women scuba dive and fly in airplanes with implants. There may be slight expansion and contraction of the shell with changes in pressure. This may result in a small amount of air bubbles in the implant. With gel implants as with saline filled implants you may feel or hear fluid sounds (gurgling). This should correct itself within 24-48 hours.

When can I wear an under wire bra again?

Under Wire Bra

Most doctors ask that women wait 3 months before wearing under wire bras after implant surgery. Your body will be forming scar tissue around the implant for 3 months. During this time the pressure of the wires could cause the scar tissue to form in such a way that an indentation from the wires could become permanent. After this initial healing time, under wire bras should be worn intermittently to avoid permanent indentation.



Will my breasts still move like normal breasts?

Breast Movement

This depends upon multiple factors, such as the type of implant you receive, the pocket dissection, the way your body holds the implant and whether or not there is any degree of capsular contracture. It is possible for many women to have breast implants that are soft and move nicely, while other women have results that are firmer with an implant more fixed in position.

How much does the implant weigh?

Implant Weight

The weight of an implant varies with size and fill volume. A 250 cc implant filled with 250 cc of gel weighs approximately 250 grams.

Will getting implants cause stretch marks on my breasts?

Stretch Marks

Insertion of implants can cause stretch marks but rarely does. If you are concerned, go for a smaller size implant to minimize the stretching of the skin, or choose a Spectrum® adjustable implant to slowly stretch the skin over time.



What effect does smoking have on the healing process after surgery?

Smoking Effects

Smoking causes the blood vessels to constrict, reducing the blood supply and the oxygen carried by the blood to the surgical area. The tissues need this blood supply and the oxygen that the blood carries in order to heal. When the blood supply is reduced the tissues heal more slowly. Different doctors have different time frames for patients to refrain from smoking before and after surgery. We hear anything from five weeks prior and after, to one to two weeks prior and after. Ask your doctor how long he/she would like you to stop smoking before and after your surgery.

Will I lose nipple sensation?

Nipple Sensation

There can be changes in nipple sensation after implant surgery. Feeling in the nipple and breast can increase or decrease. The range of change varies from no feeling to intense feeling and can be temporary or permanent.

Should I be at my ideal weight before I have a breast implant procedure?

Weight Gain or Loss

You should be close to your ideal weight. A significant loss of weight after receiving breast implants could alter the results in a manner that is not satisfactory to you. There could be some ptosis (drooping) and a reduction in size. A significant gain in weight could cause an increase in breast size.



I'm over 50 years old. Am I too old to get breast implants?

Age

General good health is important, not age.

What will happen during pregnancy?

Pregnancy

Every woman is an individual and therefore has different results whether before a pregnancy or after. Your breasts will enlarge and will go through all the usual changes associated with pregnancy. The amount of enlargement will vary from woman to woman and the size of the implants will factor into this as well.

Can I still breast-feed?

Breast Feeding

Many women with breast implants have successfully breast fed their babies. Current studies indicate that women with breast implants, either gel or saline, do not have any higher levels of silicone in their milk than women without breast implants. Breast implants can, however, interfere with the ability of some women to breast-feed. The peri-areola incision site is more likely to affect this ability. Some women experience mastitis, inflammation in the breast ducts, during this time, which can also cause capsular contracture. Taking antibiotics when symptoms first appear may minimize the potential for this problem. You should always report signs of inflammation to your physician.



Hello - My name is Diane Hart.

I am a registered nurse and have been helping to educate women by answering their plastic surgery questions for the past ten years.

The questions and answers you can find in this brochure are a collection of questions I received over the past years. I hope they will be helpful for you in making a decision about breast implants.

Should you have any further questions, please contact me via email at the following address:

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